

Hegel and
Shakespeare on MORAL
IMAGINATION



Jennifer Ann Bates

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Moral Imagination

Jennifer Ann Bates

SUNY
P R E S S

Cover print entitled "Prince Henry, Poins and Falstaff" by William Orchardson;
circa 1880

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*For my mother Catherine Young Bates
and my brother Greg Bates*

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Preface

The General Concerns of this Book

This book concerns shapes of self-consciousness and their roles in the tricky interface between reality and drama. Shakespeare's plots and characters are used to shed light on Hegelian dialectic and Hegel's *Aesthetics* and *Phenomenology of Spirit* (among other of his works) to shed light on Shakespeare's dramas. The focus is on normative action and on how interpretations of drama and history constrain it. For example: How much luck and necessity drive a character's actions? Is Coriolanus a better individual to use (than Antigone) in Hegel's account of the Kinship-State conflict? What disorients us and makes us morally stuck? What is a good or a bad sovereign self? Is there a moral pragmatics of wit? What is the relationship between law, tragedy, and comedy? Once one has reached "Absolute Knowing," what is one's relationship to all previous forms of consciousness? Are the previous stages theatrical scenes? Must morality give way to something higher? *En route*, we trace the development of deleterious concepts such as Fate, Anti-*Aufhebung*, crime, evil, and hypocrisy, as well as helpful concepts such as wonder, judgment, forgiveness, and justice.

The chapters of this book are a collection of essays on a variety of topics that come out of studying Hegel and Shakespeare side by side. In the Introduction, I do look briefly at Hegel's many discussions of Shakespeare (mostly in his *Aesthetics*) and at the German reception of Shakespeare at the time of Hegel. But this is just to set the context. The book is not primarily concerned with this history. The chapters are discussion pieces on the topic of moral imagination in Hegelian philosophy and Shakespearean drama.

This said, themes have nevertheless emerged which run through multiple chapters. And Parts II and III can be read together as a progressive investigation of stages in the relation of the sovereign self and justice. I summarize the chapters and these themes later in this Preface. First, let me dispense with an apparent problem with the project of the book.

Anachronisms

The project of this book involves several anachronisms. First, we discuss Hegel's quintessentially *modern* ethical theory (late 18th–19th C.) alongside Elizabethan Shakespearean morality (later 16th C.). Hegel's theory of morality (with his distinction between *Moralität* and *Sittlichkeit* (Ethical Life)) relies on modern developments from Descartes through to Kant. But Shakespeare does not span this period: Shakespeare was thirty-two years old when Descartes was born, and by then Shakespeare had written three History plays and *Romeo and Juliet*.

Shakespeare was a contemporary of Francis Bacon's (Shakespeare b. 1564, Bacon b. 1561). Their Renaissance world, on the cusp of the scientific revolution, was still awash in medieval Aristotelianism and the influence of the Church. Copernicus's *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* had just appeared (1543)—more than two centuries before the “Copernican Revolution” of Kant's 1781 *Critique of Pure Reason*, a philosophical revolution without which Hegel's theory of morality is unthinkable.

The anachronism deepens when we consider that the historical period from which Shakespeare draws his History plays is earlier than Shakespeare's time. For example, Henry V ruled from 1413–1422. This is further complicated by Shakespeare's own anachronisms in his plays. For example, in *Henry V*, Shakespeare has the medieval archbishop express a Protestant view that no miracles occurred after scriptural times (“It must be so, for miracles are ceased”¹). Furthermore, there is Shakespeare's notorious lack of concern for unity of time in dramatic action. For example, in *Cymbeline*, he places ancient Roman scenes alongside medieval Italian bar scenes.

How then can one compare Hegel's nineteenth-century moral theory with moral issues in Shakespeare's dramas? To take but one example: How do we overcome the anachronisms involved in comparing the character of Falstaff, in *Henry IV*, with Hegel's discussion, in his 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit*, of Diderot's character Rameau (in *Rameau's Nephew*, written circa 1773)?²

Hegel's concept of Spirit (*Geist*) is, generally speaking, the “I” that is a “we.” It is a self-interpreting social consciousness. One answer to the problem of anachronism is to take Hegel's account of the development of Spirit over history as the rule, and then plot into that history the stage of ethical consciousness present during Shakespeare's time, and then to further plot in, elsewhere on Hegel's time line, the stages of consciousness of characters that appear within Shakespeare's plays.

But plotting in the characters is not possible if we take Shakespeare's own use of anachronisms into account. It is also undesirable if we are to genuinely compare the two authors. For plotting Shakespeare's thinking in general, as a pre-modern moment within Hegel's account of the historical development of Spirit, reduces the book to an exercise in Hegelian philosophy. Since Hegel

holds that the whole of reason only comes on the world stage centuries after Shakespeare's time, Shakespeare could only offer us *partial truths* limited by their time in history. But even Hegel holds that Shakespeare imparts *whole truths*.

I have chosen, therefore, to proceed by way of what I call "productive syntheses" of Hegelian and Shakespearean content.

The Solution to These Anachronisms: Productive Syntheses

Productive syntheses do not always "work" in terms of a history or in terms of a Hegelian logical argument. But the tension involved in putting two heterogeneous things together is productive: One side illuminates the other, often in ways not seen before. The comparison clarifies and sometimes suggests alternate approaches to Hegel's explanation of a topic: for example, the comparison of Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* with Hegel's discussion of Antigone in the *Phenomenology*, offers an alternative approach to Hegel's account of the Kinship-State relationship in Ethical Spirit. It does so even if Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* could not have been written with that in mind. On the other side, the comparisons give Shakespeare's characters new dimensions, sometimes amplifying them, sometimes restricting them, as for example when we place Falstaff's seemingly infinite and atemporal wit in the context of Hegel's historical, dialectical development of wit in his chapter on Spirit in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. I use Hegel and Shakespeare to bring each other into light.

Morality in Dramatic Art and in Philosophy

Finally, the book concerns morality from the vantage points of both dramatic art and practical philosophy. According to Hegel, dramatic art is the highest form of art (for reasons we will discuss shortly). Hegel also considers Art in general to be a form of Absolute Spirit. So in investigating dramatic art, according to Hegel, we are looking at one of the most advanced way in which we interpret the world.

However, Hegel claims that any art, even its highest form, becomes fully comprehended only through philosophical analysis. This would make it seem that in discussing art in terms of morality, we subjugate art to philosophy. However, in Hegel, philosophy does not grasp its subject matter in such a subjugating manner. Hegel clarifies this by making a distinction between merely understanding something and truly comprehending it "scientifically":

Instead of entering into the immanent content of the thing, it [mere understanding—JB] is forever surveying the whole and standing

above the particular existence of which it is speaking, i.e., it does not see it at all. Scientific cognition, on the contrary, demands surrender to the life of the object, or, what amounts to the same thing, confronting and expressing its inner necessity.³

Although this book engages in Hegelian philosophical science about Shakespeare's artistic insights, on Hegel's terms, such a philosophical science must thoroughly involve itself in its subject matter.

There is also the fact that Shakespeare's plays cast their light on Hegel: There are Shakespearean characters for which we cannot find a corresponding shape of consciousness in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (for example, Othello's jealousy⁴); and there are characters in Shakespeare who seem to better illustrate a phenomenological moment than the character chosen by Hegel. In other words, as much as Hegel can help us comprehend Shakespeare, there are many venues down which Shakespearean characters wander. Our inquiry into morality is just as concerned with these artful careers, even—indeed especially—when they challenge Hegelian synthesis. I discuss the relation between morality and art further in my Introduction.

Summary of the Book Chapters

My Introduction discusses the implicit moral theory used in this book, namely the theory of Moral Imagination. Drawing on Hegel's *Aesthetics* and other of his works, I show how Hegel's philosophy is a philosophy of moral imagination. I show that this is not inconsistent with Hegel's distinction between morality (*Moralität*) and ethics (*Sittlichkeit*). I put Hegel's discussions of Shakespeare into historical context by summarizing the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century German reception of Shakespeare. This includes a brief look at interpretations of Shakespeare by German Hegelians.

The book is then divided into three parts. In short, Part I discusses Hegelian sublation in relation to Shakespeare's tragedies and comedies. Part II provides a sustained investigation of the phenomenological development of the "sovereign self" of princes and kings through the History plays. Part III concerns the possibility of an absolute standpoint in the Romance plays and in Hegel's "Absolute Knowing." Let me summarize the parts and chapters in more detail.

Part I: Sublations in Tragedy and Comedy

This part is a collection of four unrelated articles on themes involving Hegel and Shakespeare. Chapter 1 investigates moral luck in tragedy and comedy for

Shakespeare and for Hegel. We look at the role that dialectical necessity and negation play in plots and in characters of varying degrees of self-consciousness. Finally, we analyze the impact of necessity and negation in tragedy and comedy. (We explore, for example, Iago's evil declaration "I am not who I am," and the comical declaration by the actor playing a wall, in the play within *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, that he is a man and not a wall.)

Chapter 2 engages feminist critiques (particularly Judith Butler's) of Hegel's use of Sophocles' Antigone in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*; I claim that the figure of Coriolanus is a better figure for Hegel's account of the Kinship-State conflict.

Chapter 3 compares Hegel's notion of *Aufhebung* (sublation) with what I call "anti-*Aufhebung*." In Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, sublation is the dialectical means by which consciousness rises to higher and higher levels of insight. We trace the development of Hamlet's moral imagination as he rises through levels of insight about the murder of his father. I discuss whether he achieves what Hegel calls inferential cognition of the truth. Hamlet's rise in insight is then discussed in relation to downward spirals (especially that experienced by Ophelia in her madness), experiences driven by anti-*Aufhebung*. This is explored through the role of ghosts and death in the play.

Chapter 4 concerns the problem of genius in *King Lear*. In Hegel's *Encyclopedia Philosophy of Mind*, "genius" is part of the "Feeling Soul." The feeling soul is subconscious contradiction; consciousness has an urge to overcome contradiction; wonder is that urge. Wonder dislocates the merging character of genius, thereby causing the feeling soul (with its genius) to develop into consciousness (with its capacity to begin philosophy). In Shakespeare's *King Lear*, there is a dialectic between a logic of geniuses (Fate) and a logic of consciousness (Wonder). The conclusion of the play reveals that *Lear* is a tragedy of wonder. It urges us to recover wonder, to be philosophers rather than geniuses.

Part II: Ethical Life and the History Plays: The Development of Negative Infinite Judgment and the Limits of the Sovereign Self.

This part investigates moral action in relation to politics, power, and sovereign selves. I trace how Hegel's notion of "infinite judgment" develops through various forms of alienation and how wit is a symptom and cure of this alienation. The first two chapters (Chapters 5 and 6) concern Sovereign Alienation and the Development of Wit.

Thus Chapter 5 concerns the alienation of the Universal Will (of the "I" that is a "We"). I look at Richard II in the light of Hegel's discussion of the will in Chapter 5 of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

Chapter 6 concerns the Politics of Wit in Alienated Culture. I contrast the vitality and insights of Falstaff—a man whose wit, according to Harold

Bloom, rises above moral issues—with the dialectical dead-ends of the culture of wit in Hegel's account of *Rameau's Nephew* and 17th Century French Culture in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

The next four chapters of Part II concern Sovereign Deceit and the Rejection of Wit. It is essentially an effort to diagnose Henry V's behavior. Thus Chapter 7 concerns Henry V's rejection of the thieving "men of the moon" and his posturing of virtue. I interpret this "unchangeableness" in the light of Hegel's theory of virtue. Chapter 8 looks at Hegel's theory of crime and evil. In the light of Hegel's theory, we retrace the "rights" of the sovereign selves of the History plays so far. Chapter 9 concerns conscience, hypocrisy, and self-deceit. I contrast three other princes (Richard III, Hamlet, and Macbeth) with Henry V. My conclusion is that Henry V's rejection of wit and posturing of virtue is self-deceiving hypocrisy and therefore the pinnacle of evil.

The last chapter of Part II concerns Sovereign Wit and the End of Alienation. That is, Chapter 10 concerns Hegel's conception of princely pardon as the prototype of forgiveness in society. Drawing on Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* and *Phenomenology of Spirit*, I show that pardon is better than policy, that the "majesty of mind" is better than Henry V's politics of virtue. I conclude that, in the face of the necessary tragic nature of ethical life, a complete conception of justice requires a standpoint other than that of history and policy-based morality.

Part III: Universal Wit: The Romance Plays and Absolute Knowing

This part concerns the possibility of an absolute standpoint. I show that Shakespeare's Romance plays, like Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (especially the last chapter "Absolute Knowing") express a language of what I call "Universal Wit." This language is phenomenological and self-consciously imaginative.

Chapter 11 concerns Universal Wit as the Absolute Theater of Identity. A proper understanding of identity shows alienation and return to be inherent to its structure. Drawing predominantly on *Pericles*, I discuss the character of the Romance plays and of Absolute Knowing in terms of "Being at Sea"; then I show how this new vantage point is, in both Hegel and Shakespeare, that of Universal Wit. I explain the commonalities and differences in Hegel and Shakespeare's Universal Wit. I conclude with a case of "Being at Sea" by comparing Prospero and Hegel's Beautiful Soul. Hegel and Shakespeare, through Universal Wit, attempt to show us how to prosper in the tempest of identity. This cannot occur without forgiveness: The temporal dimension of judgment reveals that on the island of imagination, where identity and difference meet, we find ways to forgive. The role of forgiveness in *The Tempest* and in Hegel's transformed Beautiful Soul (who in forgiveness rises from Spirit to "Absolute Spirit") shows us that we have arrived at wit's end.

Chapter 12, “Absolute Infections and their Cure,” involves the flip side of Universal Wit: Universal Sovereign Will. This will is an “infection” of consciousness. I look at the role of infection in *A Winter’s Tale*. In particular, I discuss the King’s jealousy, which is expressed metaphorically as an “infection” of his brains. Then I look at the role of infection in Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*. I draw in particular on Hegel’s account of the infection of “Pure thought” in the Enlightenment. I argue that that infection is brought about by the pervasive expansion throughout society of an uneducated wit. I also argue that, in Hegel, it leads both to the fever of the Terror of the French Revolution and to the inoculation of Spirit against its power ideologies, in Absolute Knowing.

Both infections have their root in the narcissism of conception (in both the sexual and conceptual sense) with regard to progeny. The concepts of cuckolding (in the *Winter’s Tale*) and utility (in the *Phenomenology*) reveal that neither infection nor cure can be comprehended solely in terms of sin or insight, nature or grafting. Rather, we must investigate our urges for sexual and ideological conception. This involves becoming fully aware of the fabric of bodies and of culture.

The general conclusion of the book, from the point of view of Hegelian Studies, is the following. There is a story to be told about Hegel’s overall account of morality in its relation to Objective Spirit and Absolute Spirit. The cure for infections of contingency or abstraction is not found in the self or in history alone. It is found in the imaginative, dramatic interface between self and history. This is why, for Hegel, art is part of Absolute Spirit (not of Objective Spirit): Art is higher than the State and its tragic character. The philosophical tension we are left with is a tension that is inherent within any identity: Universal Wit must be a concrete universal. In this respect, what I have called Hegel’s Universal Wit recognizes that its knowing is only ever a partial development. Hegel would be happy, therefore, with our second discovery. Namely, that from the standpoint of a developing Universal Wit, we can enter into productive tension with Shakespearean drama and read some of Hegel’s phenomenological moments, differently.

The conclusion of the book from the point of view of Shakespeare studies is that, by bringing Hegel’s view that “what is rational is actual and what is actual is rational”⁷⁵ to bear on the plays, we have new, true stories to tell about how these characters work in their dramatic contexts and in the education of our Spirit.

The Book’s Contribution to Scholarship

I started writing this book almost a decade ago out of a love for both Hegel and Shakespeare. Since I began, there have been a number of books written

concerning philosophy and Shakespeare. There is the volume of essays edited by John J. Joughin entitled *Philosophical Shakespeares*;⁶ Colin McGinn's *Shakespeare's Philosophy: Discovering the Meaning Behind the Plays*;⁷ A. D. Nuttall's *Shakespeare the Thinker*;⁸ Tzachi Zamir's *Double Vision: Moral Philosophy and Shakespearean Drama*;⁹ and Michael Witmore's *Shakespearean Metaphysics*.¹⁰ More recently, there is Paul Kottman's *A Politics of the Scene* and his edited volume *Philosophers on Shakespeare*.¹¹ Before any of these there was Stanley Cavell's *Disowning Knowledge in Seven Plays of Shakespeare*.¹²

My book differs from these in that it deals specifically with Hegel and not other philosophers. This generates a different language and approach. Since my focus has been on Hegel and Shakespeare and on productive syntheses arising out of reading them together, I have not engaged these other approaches in any significant way.

With regard to Hegel's treatment of drama, there are a number of well-known articles and books in print, for example the work by A. C. Bradley's "Hegel's Theory of Tragedy" and "The Rejection of Falstaff" in his *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*.¹³ For an overview of the topic, see Otto Pöggeler's "Hegel und die griechische Tragödie."¹⁴ There are also the books articles by Anne and Henry Paolucci (e.g., their book *Hegel on Tragedy*),¹⁵ as well as articles such as "Hegel's Theory of Comedy" by Anne Paolucci¹⁶ and "The Poetics of Aristotle and Hegel" by Henry Paolucci,¹⁷ and more recently their *Hegelian Literary Perspectives*.¹⁸ In German there is Ursula Franke's and Karsten Berr's *Kulturpolitik und Kunstgeschichte: Perspektiven der Hegelschen Ästhetik*.¹⁹ For the latest in Hegel research in general, there is the work by the Director of the Hegel-Archiv, Walter Jaeschke: *Hegel-Handbuch: Leben, Werk, Wirkung*.²⁰

A number of scholarly works are also available concerning Hegel's reception of Shakespeare. For example: Maria Salditt's *Hegels Shakespeare-Interpretation*;²¹ Emil Wolf's "Hegel und Shakespeare";²² Anne Paolucci's "Bradley and Hegel on Shakespeare";²³ and more recently, Claus Uhlig's "Shakespeare Between Antiquity and Modernity. A Theme of Aesthetics in Hegel and Cohen."²⁴ There is also interesting work being done currently by Andrew Cutrofello.²⁵

These books are contributions to the history of philosophy and aesthetics. My book differs in that it is a series of exercises in moral imagination using Hegelian philosophy and Shakespearean drama. As I mentioned, my Introduction covers some of these historical topics briefly for the purposes of context, but this is not an attempt to match or add to the excellent scholarship already available in that area.

As for Hegel-inspired interpretations of Shakespeare, there is a tradition in Germany of this (see my Introduction, p. 15). My book differs: I have not set out to generate a Hegelian reading of Shakespeare; the book is a comparative analysis that is designed to bring both Hegel and Shakespeare into a new light

with the more general intention of exploring our moral imagination through drama and philosophy.

A book that came out just as I was finishing mine (and thus too late to address) is Sara MacDonald's *Finding Freedom: Hegel's Philosophy and the Emancipation of Women*.²⁶ MacDonald deals a lot with Shakespeare and Hegel's discussion of him. However, her book is primarily about the relationship between women, politics, and art in Hegel's work.

Some journal articles do something similar to my project in that the author picks a topic (moral or otherwise) and, using Hegel and Shakespeare, brings it to life. An example of this is Jeffrey Reid's "The Fiery Crucible, Yorick's Skull and Leprosy in the Sky: Hegel and the Otherness of Nature."²⁷ To date, however, no book-length monograph provides an exploratory exchange between Hegel's philosophy and Shakespearean drama with a focus on moral imagination.

In *Hegel, Literature and the Problem of Agency*,²⁸ Allen Speight addresses some topics that I address in this book. But our arenas of investigation and our goals are different. Speight is concerned with agency in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* and with why that book makes use of literary works and genres.²⁹ My book is concerned with agency in terms of moral imagination and my goal is to bring Hegelian philosophy and Shakespearean drama into productive tension using a variety of works by Hegel and Shakespeare. I make extensive use of Hegel's *Aesthetics* and the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. But my topic has led me to draw from many other of Hegel's works (his *Philosophy of Right* and his *Anthropology*, for example), as well as and from parts of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* that have nothing to do with literature.

Finally, this book could be written several times over, using different plays, with different results. It is true that themes did emerge and develop (for example, the themes of sovereign self, wit, and judgment). These and other conclusions arose in the process of writing. The number of topics that can be covered in an exercise like this is huge (even when one limits oneself to just one philosopher). Many more chapters could have been written. It is my hope that this book will inspire more such investigations.

The Audience for Whom This Book Was Written

This book was written for a number of different audiences: for Hegelians of course, as well as for those interested in practical philosophy. It was also written for Shakespearean scholars. I hope they will find it fascinating and fruitful. But I have more than these specialists in philosophy and literature in mind. It was written for people in the general public who, like me, love the Bard and enjoy thinking their way through literary and dramatic characters and plots. We

do so partly for the fun of it, partly to figure out how to act our world. The fact that my analysis is at times hard is hopefully mediated by the fact that it is drawing on characters and plots so well known in our culture. Finally, as a Hegel scholar, my secret hope is that this book will bring one of the most rewarding and difficult philosophers into the public light.

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Abbreviations

Works by Shakespeare

The Shakespeare texts I use are in every case from *The Norton Shakespeare* (based on the Oxford Edition) edited by Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, and Katharine Eisaman Maus (New York and London: W. W. Norton and Company, 1997). I reference only the play titles with Act, Scene, line, and page number.

Works by Hegel

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Aesth. | <i>Lectures on Aesthetics</i> , Vol. 1 + 2. Trans. T. M. Knox. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975. |
| Ästh. | <i>Ästhetik</i> . Bd. 1 + 2. Nach der zweiten Ausgabe von H. G. Hothos, (1842). Hrsg. von F. Bassenge. Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt GmbH, 1955. |
| Enc.Phil.Mind. | <i>Encyclopaedia Philosophy of Mind</i> . Trans. W. Wallace, with <i>Zusätze in Boumann's text (1845)</i> trans. A. V. Miller. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971. |
| Enc.Phil.Mind.Ant. | <i>Anthropology</i> , in the <i>Encyclopaedia Philosophy of Mind</i> . Trans. W. Wallace, with <i>Zusätze in Boumann's text (1845)</i> trans. A. V. Miller. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971. |
| Enc.Phil.Mind.Phe. | <i>Phenomenology of Mind</i> , in the <i>Encyclopaedia Philosophy of Mind</i> . Trans. W. Wallace, with <i>Zusätze in Boumann's text (1845)</i> trans. A. V. Miller. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971. |

- Enc.Phil.Mind.Psy.* *Psychology*, in the *Encyclopaedia Philosophy of Mind*. Trans. W. Wallace, with *Zusätze in Boumann's text (1845)* trans. A. V. Miller. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.
- Enc.Logic* *The Encyclopaedia Logic*. Trans. T. F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting, and H. S. Harris. Indianapolis, Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1991.
- PoN* *Philosophy of Nature*. Translated by Petry. Michael John. London and New York: Humanities Press, Inc. 1970.
- PoS* *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. Trans. A. V. Miller. Oxford, N.Y., Toronto, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- PoR* *Philosophy of Right*. Trans. T.M. Knox. London, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1967.
- Sc. of Logic* *The Science of Logic (1812)*. Trans. A. V. Miller. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, Inc., 1969.

Introduction

For what creates a universal, lasting, and profound dramatic effect is what is really substantive in action—i.e., morality as specific subject matter, and greatness of spirit and character as form. And here too Shakespeare is supreme.

—Hegel, *Lectures on Aesthetics*¹

In a work of art, as in life, the greater a man's character the more are different interpretations put on it by different people.

—Hegel, *Lectures on Aesthetics*²

Part I: Moral Imagination

This book operates on the premise that the imagination is one of the most important arenas in ethics. A number of works have influenced me: Mark Johnson's book *Moral Imagination: Implications of Cognitive Science for Ethics*; Hegel's *Lectures on Psychology*, his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, and his *Lectures on Aesthetics*.

Mark Johnson's *Moral Imagination*

In *Moral Imagination*,³ Johnson argues for a non-dualist approach to morality. He claims that work in cognitive science, linguistics, and psychology has shown that human beings operate as whole individuals, using "moral imagination."⁴ Johnson points us to his book, co-authored with George Lakoff, entitled *Metaphors We Live By*. He elaborates as follows.

In general, we understand more abstract and less well-structured domains (such as our concepts of reason, knowledge, belief) via mappings from more concrete and highly structured domains

of experience (such as our bodily experience of vision, movement, eating, or manipulating objects).⁵

A good example is that something “*weighs* on my conscience.”

According to Johnson, our “Basic-Level Experience” and our “Narratives” are central to moral imagination. He claims that there is “abundant empirical evidence” in support of this and points to philosophical texts for support as well, such as Alasdair MacIntyre’s *After Virtue* and Paul Ricoeur’s *Time and Narrative*.⁶

Hegel’s Ethical Theory Is a Moral Imagination Theory

The idea that imagination is central to ethical thought springs from my work on the role of imagination in Hegel’s epistemology (see my *Hegel’s Theory of Imagination*).⁷ Hegel wrote his epistemology and ethics more than a century before Johnson developed his theory of moral imagination. But one can read Hegel’s philosophy as an expansion of the Johnsonian account given above. Hegel develops that non-dualist view as a dialectical, systematic account of experience. The following are my arguments in support of these claims.

Hegel’s Epistemology Paves the Way for Understanding Moral Imagination

According to Hegel, the preparation for doing speculative logic requires us to move from *Vorstellung* (representation or “picture-thinking”) to speculative thinking (thinking according to the Concept). The latter requires that we properly understand what the Concept is and can think its moments in any given representation. The moments of the Concept are immediacy, negation, and the negation of negation (or mediated synthesis). *Die Einbildungskraft* (the imagination), as the middle moment of picture-thinking, is at the heart of the Concept.

The imagination is the moment of negation: Because of it we are no longer caught in the immediacy of intuition; we have a freedom to negate given times and spaces and to put them together differently. Imagination is the first moment in cognitive sublation (*Aufhebung*) in which the mind has freedom.

The imagination is necessary for complete freedom. But it is not sufficient for it: One has to go through the long process of education (*Bildung*) and to live in a time and place in which State institutions support freedom of thought. Nonetheless, it is by thinking our imagination to its end, in the sense of understanding its role in our cognition, that we come to understand the grip that representations have on us and that we begin to exercise our freedom in all its richness.

Furthermore, Hegel’s account of the imagination in the transition from the use of signs to the use of names in his 1805–1806 *Geistesphilosophie* (*Lectures on Psychology*), and again its role in the transition, from the use of symbols to

the use of signs in his 1830 *Geistesphilosophie*, is best described in terms of layers of maps.⁸

The imagination is not only central in the genesis of communicative thought. It is also essential in maintaining the organic, living quality of that thought. According to Hegel, the inwardizing activity of the mind stores up its experiences, not in order to have fixed laws that are then unyielding to circumstance. He shows that such laws and categories do not work in our organic, embodied, ethical lives. Reason is inadequate without imagination. Indeed, he famously criticizes Kant for discussing the mind as a bag full of faculties⁹ for generating an empty formalism as the highest moral imperative¹⁰ and postulates that result in a “‘whole nest’ of thoughtless contradictions.”¹¹ It is only in externalizing signs, in constructing maps, in layering them, and reusing them, all in organic relationship to others and to our bodies’ world, that what has become rigid in the depths of our mind comes to life again.

The same principle is at work in ethics. What defines us ethically is not the self that is sunk in immediacy without the capacity for reflection or metaphorical mappings, nor a Kantian kind of transcendental self (which, according to Hegel, can just as well be evil as good). Rather, what defines us ethically is our imagination. For imagination cultivates free deliberations by means of empirical enrichments, metaphors, and narratives.

According to Hegel, in an individual’s history, as in our social histories, there is a spiraling ascent from lesser, simplistic forms of the dialectic, to more complex and comprehensive forms that embrace the depth and range of human experience. We are only as knowledgeable as the depth to which we go into our minds, both in the sense of knowing what stands before our minds in the shape of intuitions, images, memories, and thoughts, and in the sense of knowing the mind as that which gives rise to those objects. And we are only as versatile as we are widely educated about our world. The productive imagination is part of Reason and Reason cannot dispense with the content provided by imagination’s work at the other levels of cognition.

So, as I argue in my first book, Hegel’s philosophy does not impose a logic on experience or endorse a dualism of human nature. He is only understandable once we completely grasp his conception of dialectic and its developments. Since sublation (*Aufhebung*) has the imagination at its core, the imagination is operative at every level of the dialectic’s development. Therefore, to understand his philosophy, we must understand the role of imagination in it. This is what Hegel means by coming to terms with “picture-thinking.”

Moral Imagination in Hegel’s Philosophy of Right

My discussion above has largely to do with theoretical knowledge in Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* and his *Lectures on Psychology*. There are other texts from which to argue Hegel’s non-dualist epistemological and ethical foundations.

In his *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel argues that the will arises out of a diremption in nature. We use reason to control our baser natures, but our will arises out of the dialectical development of nature.¹²

Hegel's ethical life is a life arising out of history and culture, not an a priori system imposed on an otherwise uncontrolled mass of people and contingencies. The metaphors and narratives that make up that history, therefore, are the representations we must think through (in both senses) if we are to be free citizens of an awake, rational State.

In the *Philosophy of Right* account of the will, there is no normative shift in the development of will out of nature. Furthermore, the moment of morality, in which there is an incommensurability between the subjective will and everything external to it, arises well after the will has come on the scene; and according to Hegel, that moment of morality must be surpassed by a return—at a higher level—to an ethical life, a life that has overcome the incommensurability.

Allen Wood's account of Hegel's ethical theory as a "self-actualization theory" is helpful here.¹³ Wood writes that Hegel's theory is neither deontological nor teleological. (In other words, it is neither duty-driven nor purpose-driven, at least not in the Kantian sense of these.) "Its starting point is the conception of a certain self or identity to be exercised or actualized, to be embodied and expressed in action. The theory selects the actions to be performed and the ends to be pursued because they are the actions and ends of that kind of self."¹⁴

In Hegel's theory, therefore, (unlike a dualist theory), there is no line dividing our theoretical considerations from our practical deliberations.¹⁵ We have mentioned that in the *Philosophy of Right*, there is no dividing line between our natural selves and our wills. Wood also points to Hegel's account of the development of the human individual in Hegel's *Encyclopedia* in which Hegel moves "from a discussion of embodiment, through consciousness and reason, to theoretical spirit and ends with practical spirit defining itself as free spirit."¹⁶

Just as it is the whole embodied individual that inwardizes experiences and externalizes them in communication, it is a physically and socially embodied self that decides what to *do* on the basis of its experiences and the dialectical development of these into more reflective forms.

Moral Imagination and Hegel's Lectures on Aesthetics: Hegel's Use of Shakespeare as Example

Finally and most importantly for us, in his *Aesthetics*, Hegel places Shakespeare's imagination, indeed the imagination that Shakespeare gives to his characters, at the pinnacle of the arts. Hegel writes that "he [Shakespeare] equips them with a wealth of poetry but he actually gives them spirit and imagination, and, by the picture in which they can contemplate and see themselves objectively like a work of art, he makes them free artists of their own selves."¹⁷ Shakespeare

“gives them this force of imagination which enables them to see themselves not just as themselves but as another shape strange to them.”¹⁸ Let us look at Hegel’s use of Shakespeare and the imagination more closely.

IMAGINATION AS A METHOD OF DISTANCING ONESELF
FROM THE IMMEDIATE

In the section of the *Aesthetics* called “Symbolism of the Comparative Art-Form,” Hegel praises Shakespeare for his ability to make his characters distance themselves from their unfortunate or evil situations by using the language of simile, metaphor, and comparisons. He gives many examples from Shakespeare, like the following from *Henry IV*: When “old Northumberland asks the messenger who came to tell him of Percy’s death ‘How doth my son and brother?’ and gets no answer, he cries out in the composure of bitterest grief [2 Henry IV, Act I, scene i]:

Thou tremblest; and the whiteness in thy cheek
Is apter than thy tongue to tell thy errand.
Even such a man, so faint, so spiritless,
So dull, so dead in look, so woe-begone,
Drew Priam’s curtain in the dead of night,
And would have told him half his Troy was burnt;
But Priam found the fire ere he his tongue,
And I my Percy’s death ere thou report’st it.¹⁹

Hegel also uses Macbeth as an example. In the face of the horrid death of Lady Macbeth, Macbeth says: ‘Out, out, brief candle! / Life’s but a walking shadow; a poor player / That struts and frets his hour upon the stage / And then is heard no more: it is a tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing.’”²⁰ The irony here of course is that Macbeth is symbolically representing the death of his own imagination as well as the death of his wife. I will return to this in Chapter 9.

According to Hegel, the character’s distancing via simile makes him or her “stronger and more noble.” Being more “noble” is only vaguely moral. The point I want to draw out here is that distancing through metaphor, simile, comparatives, and narratives is present in ethical deliberation. There are levels of distancing, and, at each level, varieties of distancing. Hegel goes to great dialectical length to show these as they appear in art. That the distancing is imaginative is clear. How distancing is moral is a question that needs to be solved differently for each particular moral topic and character. For example, in Chapter 9, I show how imaginative distancing can be at work at different levels and in a variety of ways, in the consciences of characters such as Richard III, Macbeth, Hamlet, and Henry V.

HEGEL'S TEXT IS ITSELF AN EXAMPLE OF METAPHORICAL MAPPING

In Hegel's use of passages from Shakespeare to illustrate this point about distancing, we can see that Hegel is himself using layers of metaphor. In other words, on one level, he is telling us that one can become "a stronger and nobler spirit" by using similes and comparisons to distance oneself from the immediate. On another level, he is symbolizing this to us through Shakespearean drama: He is using Shakespeare's use of metaphor and simile as a map for his theory of symbolic comparison. Furthermore, Hegel is celebrating Shakespeare for making the *characters* appear so endowed with imagination as to *themselves* use metaphorical mappings with regard to their situations.²¹

In other words, the layers of comparison and metaphor in Hegel's text are performative examples of how we communicate insights. Through imagination we *create* the distance and contextual richness needed for insights into immediate experience.

Additional Remarks About the Role of Imagination in the Aesthetics

HEGEL CELEBRATES IMAGINATION IN THE DISSOLUTIONAL FINAL PHASE OF ROMANTIC ART

Hegel's history of the development of art ends with an art that is quintessentially imaginative. This final stage of art has "an interest only in . . . imaginative occupation, which is satisfied in the freest way with its hundreds of changing turns of phrase and conceits, and plays in the most ingenious manner with joy and sorrow alike."²² Hegel cites Goethe and Rückert as authors capable of this. He notes, for example, that in Goethe's poem *Wiederfinden*, "love is transferred wholly into the imagination, its movement, happiness, and bliss."²³ Hegel goes on to generalize about similar productions:

we have before us no subjective longing, no being in love, no desire, but a pure delight in the topics, an inexhaustible self-yielding of imagination, a harmless play . . . and a cheerfulness of the inwardly self-moving heart which through the serenity of the outward shape lift the soul high above all painful entanglement in the restriction of the real world.²⁴

HEGEL'S THEORY IS NOT THE ROMANTIC THEORY

This is not to say that Hegel was a German Romantic who celebrated the liberating, poetic, productive powers of the imagination over fate, reason, and law.²⁵ Romantic poetry, according to the Schlegel brothers, raises the individual

above the mundane world into a poetic “world with its own laws, proportions, relation and measurements that stand out from those of the real world in a most meaningful manner.”²⁶ That “most meaningful manner” relies on mythical structures rather than on structures that are properly expressive of the actual, real world.

Nor is the distancing the same as Romantic irony (or its ethical equivalent in Fichte’s abstracted and all-productive ego).²⁷ Hegel claims that Romantic irony reduces true pathos and character to ridiculous emotion and frivolous caricature and that Fichte’s ego is hard to separate from evil.

Rather, the distancing of which Hegel is writing allows us to see the inherently rich rationality of the world we are in. There is no formula for the distancing: According to Hegel, it is precisely Shakespeare’s genius that he can endow his characters with sufficient imagination to develop languages that speak directly to their particular experiences and situations. Imaginative languages arise out of their world and reflect that world more intensively.

Interestingly, we see this in Shakespeare’s life. According to Stephen Greenblatt:

Shakespeare was a master of . . . distancing; if he had a sympathetic understanding of country customs, he also had ways of showing that they were no longer his native element. . . . Virtually all his close relatives were farmers, and in his childhood he clearly spent a great deal of time in their orchard and market gardens, in the surrounding fields and woods, and in tiny rural hamlets with their traditional seasonal festival and folk customs. . . . [Shakespeare] used his boyhood experiences—as he used virtually all of his experiences—as an inexhaustible source of metaphor.²⁸

SIMILE AND COMPARISON PROVIDE *ETHICAL* DISTANCING

The kind of character one *is* determines one’s level of moral insight. We have seen that for Hegel, the kind of self one is determines both one’s practical and theoretical view. The different levels of distancing correspond to levels of self-consciousness in the dramatic characters in relation to their situations. Sometimes an image provides a merely “tranquilizing effect” (e.g., for Cleopatra at death’s door).²⁹ Other times, the image or comparison is generated by a skeptical character in order to sort out what is true (e.g., Hamlet’s play “The Mouse Trap”).

According to Hegel, the difference between ancient and modern drama has to do with the kind of ethical agency at work. In Sophocles’ *Antigone*, Antigone and Creon are two sides of an immediate ethical substance that is self-divided into the law of the Penates (the household gods) and the law of

the State. The tragedy is not so much personal as the destruction of that form of ethical substance. In *Hamlet*, on the other hand, what is at issue is Hamlet's character, his skepticism, and the strictly individual pathos that drives him. And the tragedy is his.

According to Hegel, ethical categories arise at certain points in the history of human development: For example, Hegel claims that conscience is not an ancient Greek phenomenon but a quintessentially modern one.³⁰

Again, the concept of fate is very different in ancient and modern drama.³¹ In modern drama, a character's fate is as much or more a result of the individual's character and passion as of the circumstances into which that character—with the kinds of propensities for action that such a character has—finds him- or herself.³² It is part of the work in the chapters of my book to show what kinds of language and (ethical) insights are at work in different levels of imaginative distancing.

HOWEVER, ART IS NOT ABOUT "MORAL BETTERMENT"

One might reply that Hegel's celebration of imagination in *art* does not translate into *ethical* theory. For support, one might point to Hegel's explicit argument in the *Aesthetics*, against art as "moral betterment."³³

But Hegel's argument against art as moral betterment is not pitched against our gaining moral insight from art. It is pitched against making the *aim* of art be moral insight. More broadly, Hegel is arguing against art being teleological or deontological in any respect. In other words, in this argument, Hegel criticizes precisely the kind of dualistic thinking that we discussed above was anathema to his philosophy. Let me address his anti-teleological stance first.

According to Hegel, art should no more be directed by the desire for moral betterment than for instruction or any other goal.³⁴ Such goals make the artwork explicitly "a veil," a "pure appearance" in the service of a utility.³⁵ They pull the sensuous apart from the universal, making the sensuous subservient to the universal theory (of morality or instruction).

By contrast, Hegel argues that the work of art should be conceived holistically. It "should put before our eyes a content, not in its universality as such, but one whose universality has been absolutely individualized and sensuously particularized."³⁶ This becomes clearer when we look at his second argument against art as moral betterment. This argument is less against teleology than against deontology in particular.

Hegel writes that art should not be designed according to a (Kantian) conception of what "ought" to be. He critiques the attitude that is duty-driven. Such an art adopts the opposition of will and nature; it pitches duty against inclinations and the sensuous:

For the modern moralistic view starts from the fixed opposition between the will in its spiritual universality and the will in its sensuous natural particularity; and it consists not in the complete reconciliation of these opposed sides, but in their reciprocal battle against one another, which involves the demand that impulses in their conflict with duty must give way to it.³⁷

Hegel objects to dualisms between “the dead inherently empty concept, and the full concreteness of life, between theory or subjective thinking, and objective existence and experience.”³⁸ He admits that these oppositions have arisen naturally in consciousness. But it is therefore all-important to overcome this alienation in our understanding of art.

If general culture has run into such a contradiction, it becomes the task of philosophy to supersede the oppositions, i.e., to show that neither the one alternative in its abstraction, nor the other in the like one-sidedness, possess truth, but that they are both self-dissolving; that truth lies only in the reconciliation and mediation of both, and that this mediation is not mere demand, but what is absolutely accomplished and is ever self-accomplishing.³⁹

Against the teleological and deontological view of art as moral betterment, Hegel asserts that we must delve into the self-accomplishing process of art.

Against this we must maintain that art’s vocation is to unveil the *truth* in the form of sensuous artistic configuration, to set forth the reconciled opposition just mentioned, and so to have its end and aim in itself, in this very setting forth and unveiling. For other ends, like instruction, purification, bettering, financial gain, struggling for fame and honour, have nothing to do with the work of art as such, and do not determine its nature.⁴⁰

That is the end of Hegel’s argument against art as moral betterment. To it we add the following. We need only consider the place of art in Hegel’s system: Art is one of the three forms of Absolute Spirit, alongside religion and philosophy. Art deals more comprehensively with reality than either the State (objective spirit) or individual minds (subjective spirit) can.

CONCLUSION REGARDING HEGEL’S *AESTHETICS* AND OUR PROJECT

According to Hegel, drama is the highest, most comprehensive form of art because it places the living, moving, speaking human being before us; it thereby

allows us to think through that most complex form of representation. Shakespeare is, in Hegel's view, the supreme dramatist. So if ethical life requires us to think about ourselves, about how we represent the world and ourselves to ourselves, then dramatic art, and particularly Shakespeare, is the most important to consider.

Therefore, the present book is simply doing, in more detail (though by no means comprehensively), what Hegel, in his *Aesthetics*, calls upon us to do based on his general theory about art and its relation to reality. That is, we are studying the highest form of drama in order to understand the nature of human reality. Such an investigation comprises ethics as one part of its makeup. I am focusing on that.

In conclusion, the present work assumes that Hegel's ethical theory is a kind of moral imagination theory. It is not my goal in this book to argue for this. Nonetheless, arguments in support of this theory can be found peppered throughout the book, in implicit and explicit form.

This View of Hegel's Ethics as a Theory of Moral Imagination Is Compatible with His Distinction Between Moralität (Morality) and Sittlichkeit (Ethical Life)

For Hegel scholars in particular, the title of this book requires clarification. In Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* and elsewhere, Hegel distinguishes between Morality (*Moralität*) and Ethical Life (*Sittlichkeit*). The former is chiefly concerned with the independence and freedom of the individual. The latter is concerned with the re-immersion of the free individual into rational, civil society.⁴¹ Before I defend my use of the term moral imagination, let me explain Hegel's distinction and why it matters to him.

By "morality"⁴² Hegel almost always means the Kantian conception of it. That is, he means morality that is based on the accordance of a free, autonomous will with categorically derived duty.⁴³ As I mentioned above, Hegel criticizes this view as "empty formalism."⁴⁴ Hegel thinks that the will has to recognize itself as the *ethical* reality of the actual social laws that have come about in a society's development. In other words, in ethical life,⁴⁵ as in art, any universal law must be reconciled with sensuous life rather than pitted against it in a battle for mastery. Thus, for example, according to Hegel, the requirement not to murder is not arrived at a priori. Nor is it maintained as a duty without input from the existing circumstances. It is a prohibition that has been arrived at socially and it is implemented in context.⁴⁶

For Hegel, although morality is an *advance* beyond the immediacy of right (just as, in the *Phenomenology*, it is an advance over the immediacy of ethical belief), it must be superseded. It must, because morality on its own can generate evil as much as it can generate the good. Evil arises from autonomy of will. What generates the possibility of evil is the freedom of the individual to operate on the basis of his or her particularity instead of for the common

universal good.⁴⁷ The individual must come to realize that the rational lies not simply in autonomy but equally in the ethical substance, i.e., in the mores and laws of the society. In turn however, the moral agent can only commit itself to the universal good of the society when the society has developed to the point where its institutions uphold the freedoms of individuals.⁴⁸

Given Hegel's distinction between morality and ethical life, why have I chosen the expression "*moral* imagination" in this book (instead of, say, *ethical* imagination)?

First of all, this book is not a Hegelian interpretation of Shakespeare. My use of the word "moral" is meant to encompass whatever commonly falls under that term in practical philosophy nowadays—concepts such as good, evil, conscience, right, wrong, just, and so on. The whole gambit (from morality to ethical life, as well as other practical distinctions in and outside of Hegel's philosophy) is open for investigation. In Shakespearean drama, we find ourselves all over the map of practical possibilities.

Second, according to Hegel, the moral standpoint of *Moralität* is not removed from the ethical standpoint. It is sublated into it—in other words, it is risen above but also preserved. Hegel's Ethical Life is Kantian morality conjoined with concrete, dialectically inwardized and externalized experience. In ethical life, moral theory and the social imaginary are dialectically related. Therefore, a full investigation of moral imagination in Hegel must look into both *Moralität* and *Sittlichkeit*.

Thus the expression "moral imagination" includes but is not exhausted by Hegel's notion of *Moralität*. Our investigation of moral imagination would be limited if it were kept within its arena. Similarly, although ethical life comprehends *Moralität*, our analysis of moral imagination would also be limited if we were to investigate it purely in terms of Ethical Life. We would lose the juicy discussions of, for example, evil and hypocrisy.

Finally, were I to determine the title of the book according to Hegel's distinction, I would be less able to address tensions and difficulties in that distinction to which the study of Shakespeare gives rise.⁴⁹

To conclude, Hegel's distinction between *Moralität* and *Sittlichkeit* is a distinction that falls *within* what I, following current language usage, call "moral imagination."⁵⁰

Part II: Historical Context of Hegel's Reception of Shakespeare⁵¹

Shakespeare on the Continent and his Reception in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Germany

The role of Shakespearean drama in eighteenth-century Germany simply cannot be overstated: Not only was Shakespearean drama central to the development

of eighteenth-century German culture, it was foundational in the shaping of it. Shakespeare was the rage of literary and cultural movements. These movements (and Shakespeare's role in them) shaped the identity of Germany.

In 1741, Germany had the first translation of Shakespearean drama to appear in any language. It was of *Julius Caesar*, and it was translated by the Prussian ambassador in London, Caspar Wilhelm von Borck.⁵² Borck translated the text into German Alexandrines. This version (*Der Tod des Julius Caesar*) "not merely gave men like Lessing, and, doubtless, Herder also, their first glimpse of the English poet, but it also led to the earliest German controversy on Shakespeare's art."⁵³

A debate emerged between those who held Voltaire's view that Shakespeare was a threat to proper classical theater, and those who nonetheless found something of worth in the "drunken savage." (Johann Elias Schlegel, though a Voltairean, was one of the latter.)

In these early years, German interest in Shakespeare was most aroused by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. Lessing did not have a great deal of knowledge of Shakespeare. Until at least 1753, he only knew Brock's translation of *Julius Caesar*. He was primarily interested in Aristotle and Sophocles. Nonetheless, Lessing was able to bring the classical and the Shakespearean into one discussion.⁵⁴

In his 1759 *Briefe, die neueste Literatur betreffend*, Lessing formulated two conclusions that would have enormous effect in Germany. The first was that "the drama of Shakespeare was akin to the German *Volksdrama*."⁵⁵ It was Lessing's hope that, by imitating Shakespeare, "Germany might be assisted to a national drama of her own."⁵⁶ The second was that Shakespeare "was a greater and more Aristotelian poet—in other words, more akin to Sophocles—than the great Corneille." Lessing wrote that "[a]fter the *Oedipus* of Sophocles, no piece can have more power over our passions than *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Hamlet*."⁵⁷

This was the climax of Lessing's involvement with Shakespeare (his *Ham-burgische Dramaturgie* has relatively little to say about Shakespeare). At heart, Lessing was a classicist and in sympathy with Voltaire's conception of tragedy. Finally, for Lessing, Shakespeare was great "because he could be proved to have obeyed the Greek lawgiver [Aristotle] instinctively."⁵⁸

The first great achievement of translation into German was made between 1762 and 1766 by Christoph Martin Wieland. The translation was into prose. It was clumsy, but with respect to its immediate influence on German culture "no subsequent translation could vie" with it.⁵⁹ Like Lessing, Wieland had allegiances to the classical style. And like Lessing, he was "filled with dismay at the extravagances which followed the introduction of Shakespeare to the German literary world."

It was only with the *Sturm und Drang* movement in Germany that something new took hold. Critics moved away from "Shakespeare the brother of Sophocles" to "Shakespeare the voice of nature." The writers in this move-

ment did not criticize; “they worshipped; they sought to ‘feel’ Shakespeare, to grasp his spirit.”

The new view was put forward by Heinrich Wilhelm von Gerstenberg in his *Briefe über Merkwürdigkeiten der Literatur*. These letters are “perhaps the most important contribution to continental Shakespearean criticism of the entire eighteenth century.” They were, not least because of their influence on Herder.

Herder’s essay on Shakespeare was a main part of the pamphlet *Von deutscher Art und Kunst* (1773) “with which the new movement was ushered in.”⁶⁰ But Herder tempered the *Sturm and Drang* views. He made them acceptable “beyond the pale of the literary revolution.” He had read Lessing’s *Dramaturgy* and had studied Shakespeare intensively (from 1769–1772). Herder believed that the study of literature required understanding the history of literature. Sophocles and Shakespeare were trying to accomplish the same thing, but they were different because of the historical periods within which they were writing. With his essay, Herder “sowed the seeds of the German romantic criticism of a later date.”

New translations of Shakespeare began to emerge, though as yet none of them were particularly good. In 1775–77, an advance was made in terms of further naturalizing Shakespeare into German language and culture: Johann Joachim Eschenburg published *William Shakespeare’s Schauspiele*, in twelve volumes. Eschenburg thoroughly revised and completed Wieland’s translation, to the point of making an entirely new text. (It was Eschenburg’s translation into German that Hegel would read.⁶¹)

The *Sturm and Drang* movement had thoroughly entrenched Shakespearean drama into the German national repertory. In the years 1777–1792, Germany’s greatest actor, Friedrich Ludwig Schöder, produced many Shakespearean plays (*Othello*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Measure for Measure*, *King Lear*, *Richard II*, *Henry IV*, *Macbeth*, and *Much Ado About Nothing*). Shakespeare became “one of the chief assets of [the German] national stage.”⁶² This was not the Shakespeare that Germany came to know best twenty years later through Schlegel, but it was what was possible for the theater in Germany at the time. When these performances were occurring, Hegel would have grown from the age of seven to twelve years old.

The final, main shape of Shakespeare in German culture was introduced by the Romantic School and by August Wilhelm Schlegel’s and his followers’ translations of Shakespeare.⁶³ Like the members of the *Sturm and Drang* movement, the romantics were in awe of Shakespeare. But unlike them, the romantics sought to interpret and understand him. The starting point for the romantic debates was Goethe’s famous comparison, in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, of Hamlet to an oak tree in a costly jar.

Schlegel’s translations started in 1797. By 1801, eight volumes of *Shakespeare’s Dramatische Werke, übersetzt von August Wilhelm Schlegel* had appeared. The ninth volume appeared in 1810. Its worth is unparalleled:

[N]o translation of Shakespeare can vie with this in the exactitude with which the spirit and the poetic atmosphere of the original have been reproduced; to Schlegel, in the main, belongs the credit of having made Shakespeare the joint possession of two nations.⁶⁴

Ironically, the attitude of Germany's two greatest poets at the turn of the century was not favourable toward Shakespeare. Goethe and Schiller endorsed a kind of classicism which was "opposed to the irregularities and subjectivity of Shakespeare's art." They produced "carefully pruned and polished" versions of *Romeo and Juliet* (1812) and *Macbeth* (1800), respectively, and in 1815, Goethe produced a kind of apology for his adaptation (see his *Shakespeare und Kein Ende!*).

In conclusion, the eighteenth-century German reception of Shakespeare was profound and extensive:

[Shakespeare's] influence in Germany from Borck to Schlegel can hardly be exaggerated; and it may be said without paradox that the entire efflorescence of German eighteenth century literature would have been otherwise—have stood much nearer to the main movement of European literature in that century—had it not been for Shakespeare. It was he who awakened the Germanic spirit in modern German literature and pointed out to Germany how the traditions of the renaissance poetics might be abandoned; it was he who freed the intellectual growth of northern Europe from the clogging presence of influences Latin in their origin. . . . There was thus hardly a question round which controversy raged in the German literature of the eighteenth century with which the English poet was not in some way bound up.⁶⁵

In the early nineteenth century, the gulf between Germany and France with regard to Shakespeare was wider than ever ("in the summer of 1822, English actors, who attempted to present *Hamlet* and *Othello* in Paris, were actually hissed off the stage."⁶⁶) As the century progressed, Shakespearean drama gained ground in France. But it was only ever a matter "of intellectual curiosity." In Germany, Shakespeare had become completely naturalized. Translations upon translations were made.⁶⁷ Shakespeare has remained a "vital and ever-present force" in German literature.

Nonetheless, by the middle of the century, a more modern kind of drama appeared on the German stage, and those still caught up in Shakespeare were no longer experiencing it as a new revelation in the way that Goethe and Herder had experienced it. By the middle of the nineteenth century, modern German drama had "little in common with Elizabethan ideals."

Leaving drama aside, a number of things need to be said about the history of German scholarship on Shakespeare. Several figures and works stand out.

Aside from Goethe's analysis of Hamlet mentioned above, there was Friedrich Schlegel's analysis of genius, Tieck's extensive investigations into the entire world of Shakespeare, and August Wilhelm Schlegel's lectures *Über dramatische Kunst und Literature* (1809–1811). Schlegel's work led to the popularization of the romantic criticism of Shakespeare and was of international importance.⁶⁸

Hegelian-Inspired Shakespearean Criticism in the Nineteenth Century
and this Book

There were several German authors who had Hegelian readings of Shakespeare:

The influence of Hegel's aesthetics, which was essentially anti-romantic in its tendency, is to be seen in Hermann Ulrici's *Über Shakespeares dramatische Kunst und sein Verhältnis zu Calderon und Goethe* (1839), and, in a less accentuated form, in Georg Gottfried Gervinus's *Shakespeare* (1849–52), in Friedrich Kreyssig's *Vorlesungen über Shakespeare und seine Werke* (1858) and in the recently published *Shakespeare-Vorträge* of the famous Swabian Hegelian, Friedrich Theodor Vischer.⁶⁹

This passage from the *Cambridge History* continues in a way that is critical of Hegelian interpretations of Shakespeare. This critical attitude is naturally of interest to me in relation to my own project in the chapters that follow. On the one hand, I can attribute the Cambridge attitude to the consistently critical light which Anglo-American (analytic) philosophy sheds on Continental philosophy. On the other hand, the critique invokes a similar warning to the one Hegel made when he admonished against seeing art as fundamentally teleological or deontological. With this in mind, I cite the Cambridge critique as an amulet against such mistakes in my book:

On the whole, the influence of Hegelianism on German Shakespeare criticism has not been favourable; it has led to an excessive preoccupation with metaphysical theories of tragic guilt and tragic purpose, to a misleading confusion of moral and aesthetic standards and to a too confident reliance on *a priori* theories of literary genius. It has also made it difficult for Shakespeare's countrymen to appreciate at their true value the learning and scholarship which lay behind the metaphysical veil.⁷⁰

Part III: Hegel's Reception of Shakespeare in the *Aesthetics*⁷¹

The citations I have already discussed are but a few examples of the many passages in which Hegel celebrates Shakespeare's supremacy in dramatic art. To

make sense of this supremacy within Hegel's philosophy of art, let me briefly describe Hegel's *Lectures on Aesthetics* and then summarize where and why Shakespeare is discussed in the lectures.

A Brief Overview of the Aim and Structure of Hegel's *Lectures on Aesthetics*⁷²

The *Aesthetics* is a history of art from ancient Zoroastrianism to artists of Hegel's time. His view is that art is the objective expression of the consciousness of a people. Art developed over time in relation to developments in consciousness. Initially, art and consciousness developed from immediate, unconscious forms of symbolism. Then, they developed through increasingly self-conscious complexity. Finally, art and consciousness reached the point where art, in the modern era, self-consciously dissolves itself.

The task of the philosophy of art is to comprehend this content and development:

Art has nothing else for its function but to set forth in an adequate sensuous present what is itself inherently rich in content, and the philosophy of art must make it its chief task to comprehend in thought what this fullness of content and its beautiful mode of appearance are.⁷³

Let us briefly walk through these general claims.⁷⁴ According to Hegel, the three main eras or Forms of art are the Symbolic (to which ancient forms of Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, and Egyptian art belong), the Classical (ancient Greek and Roman art) and finally, the Romantic (medieval and modern Christian art). Each represents a development over its predecessors.

In the Classical Greek representation of the human body, art achieves its artistic ideal of unifying form and matter. But art as a shape of consciousness is completed only at the end of Romantic art form in drama.⁷⁵ In Romantic art, consciousness seeks to move beyond representation.

To illustrate the difference between the culmination of Greek art and the culmination of Romantic art, I propose that we imagine a Greek statue of a human form and beside it, Shakespeare's dramatic character Hamlet. The Greek statue is the culmination of the human desire "to be" in art; Hamlet's spoken words "to be or not to be" express human alienation. The one is contented embodiment, the other, witness to an inner spirit that is no longer at home in its shape. This is not to say that Romantic art is forlorn; it is to say that its task, unlike that of the earlier forms of art, is to deal with the recognition that the modern spirit cannot be contained in representation. Hegel, with Hamlet, might in an alienating society say: "Seems, madam! Nay, it *is*; I know

not 'seems.'"⁷⁶ Of course the truth behind such a statement, for both Hegel and Hamlet, is the assertion "I *know* seems." In other words, they are saying "I, unlike you, am fully aware of how alienated our representations of ourselves are from what we really are."

Hamlet's experience of "modern" consciousness is tragic. But in Hegel's *Aesthetics*, Hamlet's experience is not the final picture of consciousness: Art develops further. This modern separation of subjective consciousness from its representation in art has a *happy* resolution in comic drama. "The spirit of comedy is to rejoice in the destruction and dissolution of all the elements of tradition and custom which it negates."⁷⁷ According to Hegel, this is a healthy and happy condition.

Importantly for us, it is in Hegel's discussion about comedy in the last three pages of the *Aesthetics* that we find Hegel's final celebration of Shakespeare's supremacy:

In contrast to the whole prosaic way of treating comedy, the modern world has developed a type of comedy which is truly comical and truly poetic. Here once again the keynote is good humour, assured and careless gaiety despite all failure and misfortune, exuberance and the audacity of a fundamentally happy craziness, folly, and idiosyncrasy in general. Consequently there is present here once more (in a deeper wealth and inwardness of humour), whether in wider or narrower circles of society, in a subject-matter whether important or trivial, what Aristophanes achieved to perfection in his field in Greece. As a brilliant example of this sort of thing I will name Shakespeare once again. . . .⁷⁸

But there is nonetheless a limit as to how far art can go in reconciling the subjective with its representations. According to Hegel, at its culmination, art transcends itself. Comic drama—even with its success in representing time as well as place, and speech as well as figure—naturally gives over to philosophical thinking. We move from images to thought, from representation to philosophy. Thus with the peak of comic drama we arrive at Hegel's famous "dissolution of art itself":

Satisfied in itself, [absolute subjective personality] no longer unites itself with anything objective and particularized and it brings the negative side of this dissolution into consciousness in the humour of comedy. Yet on this peak[,] comedy leads at the same time to the dissolution of art altogether. . . . [T]he presence and agency of the Absolute no longer appears positively unified with the characters and aims of the real world but asserts itself only in the negative form

of cancelling everything not correspondent with it, and subjective personality alone shows itself self-confident and self-assured at the same time in this dissolution.⁷⁹

Philosophy alone can cope with the dissolutional characteristic that the act of thinking has in relation to the object that it thinks. Philosophy alone is versatile enough to accommodate the dialectical, overcoming nature that consciousness has always been but that it did not know itself to be until Hegel's time.

Shakespeare as the Pinnacle of Romantic Arts

As far as art goes, according to Hegel, Shakespeare is supreme. As I mentioned earlier, Hegel always divides each of his forms into three, since he believes there is a dialectical progression in every form from something immediate, to something contrary to that immediacy, to something that overcomes that contradiction by joining the two prior moments into a greater, more sophisticated form that comprehends the earlier moments. In the Romantic form of art, art progresses from painting to music to poetry. Within each of these, a three-part dialectic likewise develops. Thus the third moment—poetry—starts with epic poetry, develops into lyric poetry, and ends with dramatic poetry. Since poetry is the highest form of the final form of art, *its* final form—drama (indeed, comic drama)—is therefore the pinnacle of all forms of art. So when Hegel asserts that Shakespeare is the supreme dramatist (and an example of the finest when it comes to comic drama), he is making Shakespeare the supreme artist in the history of art. This is a grand claim indeed.⁸⁰

Where Hegel's Discussions of Shakespearian Drama Occur in the *Aesthetics*⁸¹

Of all the Shakespearean plays mentioned by Hegel, *Romeo and Juliet* is discussed by him the most, followed by *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*, then *Lear* and *Othello*.

Hegel's discussions are peppered throughout the *Aesthetics*. Hegel refers to Shakespeare early on, in his discussion of Collision and of Action (in particular agents and character) in drama.⁸² Shakespeare is not mentioned again until "The Symbolism of the Comparative Art Form."⁸³ There, as I discussed above, Hegel repeatedly uses Shakespeare in his discussion of metaphor, image, and in particular simile.

Further on, Hegel has a sustained discussion of Shakespeare beginning at the end of his chapter on Chivalry (Chapter II of "The Romantic Form of Art") and then throughout the following chapter on "The Formal Independent of Individual Characteristics."⁸⁴ Shakespeare appears very little from there until

the end of volume II of the *Aesthetics*, where Hegel discusses Dramatic Poetry in the final section of “The Romantic Arts.”

There, in “The Dramatic Work of Art,” Hegel discusses the three unities.⁸⁵ On the one hand, he defends Shakespeare for breaking the unity of time, on the other, he uses Shakespeare to highlight the importance of not breaking the unity of action.⁸⁶

Hegel also celebrates there how Shakespeare’s language exhibits genuine poetry: It harmoniously unites the contingencies and particularities of personality with universality.⁸⁷ This ability to harness the universal is then celebrated further with regard to Shakespearean drama’s wide range of appeal.⁸⁸

Hegel’s final discussions of Shakespeare occur in the final sections of Dramatic Poetry (and thus of at the end of the *Aesthetics* as a whole). There, Hegel discusses the principle of Tragedy, Comedy, and Drama; the Difference Between Ancient and Modern Drama; and the Concrete Development of Dramatic Poetry and its Genres. According to Hegel, *Hamlet* is an example of modern drama since the collision is not of universal forces but depends on character: What drive the modern tragic heroes to act is the “subjectivity of their heart and mind and the privacy of their own character.”⁸⁹ Hegel again celebrates Shakespeare’s ability to bring out the personality of the character. He also appeals to Shakespeare in his discussion of tragic denouement.

Given our focus on moral imagination, it is particularly interesting to note that in these pages, Hegel rejects “moralizing” plays: “[T]he more the abstract moral disposition is made the kingpin, the less can it be a passionate concentration on something, on a really substantial end, that the individual is tied to.”⁹⁰ Shakespeare succeeds because he does not overtly moralize.

Finally, as we saw above, when it comes to the last form of dramatic poetry—Comedy—Hegel asserts that Shakespeare reigns supreme.⁹¹

To summarize: Hegel uses Shakespearean drama to elucidate Hegel’s various theories about tragedy and comedy, collisions and characters, as well as more philosophical views about the unity of particularity and universality and about the final shapes of art in history. What stands out is, first, Hegel’s repeated celebration of Shakespeare’s ability to develop his characters as “whole people, entire and unique,”⁹² and second, that Hegel places Shakespeare at the pinnacle of artistic development in history.

In What Language Did Hegel Read Shakespeare?

We know from Rosencrantz’s biography that, in his early school years, Hegel had a German translation of Shakespearean drama (though it remains unknown what edition it was).⁹³ We do know that he used the German edition of Johann Joachim Eschenburg (1743–1820).⁹⁴ Terry Pinkard elaborates that “One of

[Hegel's] teachers, a Mr. Löffler, gave him at the age of eight a present of Shakespeare's works translated by Eschenburg, with the advice that although he would not understand them at that point, he would soon learn to understand them. (Hegel recorded years later in his teenage diary a laudatory remembrance of Löffler when he died).⁹⁵

The real question is whether Hegel read Shakespeare in English.⁹⁶ Pinkard claims that he did read some:

He also took great interest in the offerings in the various theaters in Paris. He was even able to see the great English actor Charles Kemble, and the legendary Irish actress Henrietta Smithson, perform Shakespeare at the newly opened English Theater in Paris; he followed the plays by reading along in the English editions he had procured, although it did seem to him that the actors were speaking rather fast.⁹⁷

There is evidence for the claim that Hegel read Shakespeare in English.⁹⁸ In a letter dated November 5, 1823, from Hegel's friend Peter Gabriel van Ghert, Ghert promises a single-volume collected works of Shakespeare from London.⁹⁹ There are also two letters that Hegel wrote to his wife in 1827 from Paris in which he indicates that he went to see Shakespeare plays played in English; he writes in one of the letters that he deplores the English troop's acting but adds that he was nonetheless able to follow because he "read along word for word in the handbook."¹⁰⁰

Conclusion

In this Introduction, I have explained the concept of moral imagination and how I use it in relation to Hegel and Shakespeare. I have addressed why, despite Hegel's distinction between morality and ethical life, it is appropriate to use "moral imagination" in discussing Hegel's work. I briefly addressed the historical importance of Shakespeare in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Germany as well as the important role Hegel attributes to Shakespeare in his *Lectures on Aesthetics*. I leave further debate about the merits of "moral imagination" to philosophers of ethics, and I leave further discussion of the role of Shakespeare in nineteenth-century Germany to historians. We now happily turn to investigations of moral imagination in this rich and strange interface of Hegelian philosophy and Shakespearean drama.

Part I

Sublations in Tragedy and Comedy

Part I is made up of largely independent chapters. We explore topics in Hegel and Shakespeare such as moral luck; kinship, and State relationships; what it means to rise up or fall off the ladder of moral certitude; and the roles that fate and wonder play in characters' efforts to see what they ought to do. These various discussions create the building blocks for the more cohesive discussion of self and power in Part II and for some of the conclusions arrived at in Part III.

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Chapter 1

A Hegelian Reading of Good and Bad Luck in Shakespearean Drama¹

Introduction: From Necessity to Contingency in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*

According to Hegel, true philosophy is a “progressive unfolding of truth.”² The individual forms making up the progression are related in a “mutual necessity” that “constitutes the life of the whole.”³ The *Phenomenology of Spirit* (originally entitled “the science of experience”), “sets forth this formative process in all its detail and necessity;” “[t]he goal is Spirit’s insight into what knowing is.”⁴

At the end of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, in the culminating moment of self-knowledge, the necessity governing these progressive moments turns into free contingency. “The self-knowing Spirit knows not only itself but also the negative of itself, or its limit: to know one’s limit is to know how to sacrifice oneself. This sacrifice is the externalization in which Spirit displays the process of its becoming Spirit in the form of *free contingent happening*. . . .”⁵

The conversion from necessity to contingency has to do with spirit’s ability, at the end of its journey, to recollect the forms. The previously necessary forms are now possibilities: unlike the World Spirit that had to “pass through these shapes over the long passage of time, and to take upon itself the enormous labour of world-history,”

... the individual . . . [has] less trouble, since all this has already been *implicitly* accomplished; *the content is already the actuality reduced to a possibility*, its immediacy overcome, and the embodied shape reduced to abbreviated, simple determinations of thought . . . [it is] now the *recollected in-itself*, ready for conversion into the form of *being-for-self*.⁶

The move from being within the unity of action to knowing the unities of action is thus a shift from the immediacy of “existence in the form of *being-in-itself*” to the “recollected in-itself” which is then converted into being-for-itself. In the *Phenomenology*, this is also a transition from being on the “path of despair” to having a kind of comedic insight into experience at the end. In this chapter (mostly in Part II), I show how some of Shakespeare’s dramas can shed light on this transition. But first, in order to set up that discussion, let me talk about drama in Hegel’s *Aesthetics*.

Part I. Drama in Hegel’s *Aesthetics*

The Place of Drama in Hegel’s *Aesthetics*; Tragedy and Comedy

Hegel’s *Aesthetics* provides a historical, progressive account of the development of self-consciousness through increasingly comprehensive forms, in terms of the art that self-consciousness makes. The highest form of artistic representation is drama. The reason is that, unlike ancient Greek sculpture or modern painting, for example, drama uses the most comprehensive of artistic mediums—the moving and speaking human body engaged in dramatic action.

According to Hegel, comedy is the highest form of drama. He ends the *Aesthetics* with a discussion of it. The reason for this is that comedy is based on the dissolution of all that is solid and serious. It comprehends and rises above the other art forms. In so doing, it also points beyond art, to the most adept form of unifying thought and being, namely, philosophy.

In Hegel’s account of drama, the two main forms are tragedy and comedy. Generally speaking, in tragedy, the main character(s) appear to succumb to the ineluctable forces of the gods, Fate or Fortune, their own character flaws, or some combination of the above. In comedy, these forces, their seriousness and authority, are funny. The comic hero puts on and takes off his or her mask at will. Seemingly serious conflicts give shape to the plot, but in comedy the ending is always festive.

In tragedy, there is a separation between the author, the characters, and the audience. In comedy, there is a playful blurring of these lines. In tragedy, plays within plays, wordplays, puns, and foolish rhymes come out in the behaviour of the fools and jesters. In *Hamlet*, the play within the play (“The Mouse Trap”) is explicit and central to the process of discovering the truth. But such playfulness in tragedy is swallowed into the main plot or is a tool in its development.

In comedy, on the other hand, the playfulness is a substantial part of the drama. Laughter is comedy’s medium. In comedy, the audience is given the wink. Its fools and jesters sometimes laugh with the audience at themselves, and enable us to laugh at ourselves as we agree with Puck’s exclamation: “Lord, what fools these mortals be!”⁷ More about this later.

Collision: The Heart of Dramatic Action

The indispensable element of both tragedy and comedy is collision. “[C]ollision is the prominent point on which the whole turns.”⁸ Hegel’s discussion of it takes place in his discussion of the three unities of place, time, and action. Like the German Romantics, Hegel finds Shakespeare’s mixing up of times and spaces, and his focus on character, preferable to the French constrictions regarding time and place, and their disregard for character. Hegel argues that such constrictions as those imposed by the French “mean nothing but setting up the prose of realities we can see as the final judge of poetry’s truth.”⁹

While Hegel is willing to let go of unity of time and place for the sake of poetry’s truth, he nonetheless asserts that unity of *action* is inviolable.¹⁰ He explains that “dramatic action . . . rests essentially on an action producing collisions.”

Collisions occur when “one individual’s aim encounters hindrances from other individuals . . . so that in this confrontation mutual conflicts and their complication result.”¹¹ Both the ends and the individuals identified with those ends come to a resolution through either “inevitable disaster or peaceful union.”¹²

Ancient vs. Modern Collisions

Hegel distinguishes between Classical (ancient) tragedy and Modern tragedy:

Modern tragedy adopts into its own sphere from the start the principle of subjectivity. Therefore it takes for its proper subject-matter and contents the subjective inner life of the character who is not, as in classical tragedy, a purely individual embodiment of ethical powers, and, keeping to this same type, it makes actions come into collision with one another as the chance of external circumstances dictates, and makes similar accidents decide, or seem to decide, the outcome.¹³

Thus in *Othello*, the collision is not overtly the divine laws governing the family versus the laws of the State (as it is for example in Sophocles’ *Antigone*). What constitute the main collisions are Iago’s hatred for Othello, and then the jealous fury of deceived Othello against innocent Desdemona. According to Hegel, Shakespeare gives some of the finest examples of “characters who come to ruin simply because of this decisive adherence to themselves and their aims.”¹⁴

Aside from subjectivity, as Hegel states above, contingencies also play a greater role in modern drama. Thus, even if, in *Othello*, we see credulity and obstinacy approaching what Hegel describes as a stoic consciousness in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Othello might nonetheless have lived happily with Desdemona. It is the contingency of Iago coming into his life and hating him

so much that causes the problem. Iago's presence has nothing to do with the will of the gods.

Nonetheless, this contingency does not override the necessary ways in which the plot must proceed or the characters act once those contingencies arise. For Hegel, the play must have universal import. To have that, the plot cannot be driven by accidents. The characters must, even in their limitations, be complete, and the author must have a profound understanding of the science of experience. Let us look at these claims more closely.

The Universal Import of Drama

Whether ancient or modern, according to Hegel "[W]hat creates a universal, lasting, and profound dramatic effect is what is really substantive in action—i.e. morality as specific subject-matter, and greatness of spirit, and character as form. And here too Shakespeare is supreme."¹⁵ In modern drama especially, this universality and completeness of the dramatic effect is not separated from the completeness of the characters, regardless of their limitations. Again, Hegel repeatedly hails Shakespeare's greatness: "Shakespeare's figures above all are whole people, entire and unique, so that we require of the actor that he shall for his part bring them before our eyes in this entire completeness."¹⁶ Indeed Hegel makes a remarkable claim about Shakespeare's ability in this respect:

... the more Shakespeare proceeds to portray on the infinite breadth of his "world-stage" the extremes of evil and folly, all the more ... does he precisely plunge his figures who dwell on these extremes into their restrictedness; of course he equips them with a wealth of poetry but *he actually gives them spirit and imagination, and, by the picture in which they can contemplate and see themselves objectively like a work of art, he makes them free artists of their own selves.* ...¹⁷

This passage is truly remarkable. In it, Hegel is asserting that Shakespeare succeeds in making his characters come to life so much that they actually reflectively design themselves.

In this respect, Shakespeare is accomplishing in art what Hegel views to be the highest requirement of scientific knowledge: "Scientific cognition ... demands surrender to the life of the object, or, what amounts to the same thing, confronting and expressing its inner necessity."¹⁸

That Shakespeare makes his characters "free artists of their own selves" shows that Shakespeare is able to let spirit pour out in free contingency. This contingency operates within necessity, namely the limitations of their "self-portrait," the "restrictedness" of their character. Their completeness lies in their restrictedness within the whole, and the way in which that restrictedness characterizes the whole.

But the universal import of a play arises not just from the aims and the completeness of the characters. According to Hegel, the drama as a whole has necessity and a comprehensive character, and the author of the drama must recognize these. In this sense, the author is identical to the Divine force behind the play. Thus Hegel writes that the decision, which resolves the collision,

cannot lie in the hands of the single individuals who oppose one another, but only in those of the Divine itself, as a totality in itself. Therefore the drama . . . must display to us the *vital working of a necessity* which, itself self-reposing, resolves every conflict and contradiction. . . . Therefore the primary requirement for a dramatic poet as an author is that *he shall have a full insight into the inner and universal element lying at the root of the aims, struggles and fates of human beings. He must be fully aware of the oppositions and complications to which action may lead in the nature of the case*, whether these arise from subjective passion and individuality of character, or from human schemes and decisions, or from concrete external affairs and circumstances. And at the same time he must be *capable of recognizing what those powers are which apportion to man the destiny due to him as a result of what he has done*. The right as well as the aberration of the passions that rage in the human heart and impel to action must be equally clear to the dramatist, so that where to the ordinary man's eye it is obscurity, chance, and confusion that prevail, *there is clearly revealed to him the actual accomplishment of what is absolutely rational and true*. . . . [H]e must have . . . the greatest openness and most comprehensive breadth of mind.¹⁹

Part II. Hegel on Good and Bad Luck in Shakespearean Drama²⁰

Given the comprehensiveness and universality of the characters and of the play's dramatic action, what would Hegel say about good and bad luck in Shakespearean drama?²¹ We might say, superficially, that Othello, Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet, and other tragic characters have bad luck in circumstance and in some cases character traits. Rosalind, Prospero, Cymbeline, Pericles, and other comic or romance characters have good luck in these and other respects. But good luck is not what makes comedy, nor is bad luck what makes tragedy. For the Elizabethan consciousness, what happened to these characters concerns one or all of the following: the Wheel of Fortune, Fate, or the will of Providence. References to Fortune and to the position of the stars or the Divine occur throughout Shakespeare's plays and characters often plead with or rail against these forces. For example, in *Hamlet* the player cries "Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune. All you gods, / In general synod take away her power; / Break all the

spokes and fellies from her wheel / And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven / As low as the fiends.”²²

We have seen that Hegel requires that drama have comprehensive and universal import; that the author of drama must be fully aware of the depth and necessity involved in the collisions and their resolution; and that the author must also allow his characters to pour themselves out in free contingency within their restrictedness. To reconcile these Hegelian requirements with Elizabethan notions of Fortune, Fate, and Providence therefore requires some work.

The key lies in the notion of dramatic identity. We can define dramatic identity as the relationship of the dramatic persona to the dramatic action. There are several levels here to consider. I am going to limit the discussion to the character’s understanding of his or her role in the unfolding of events, and to the audience’s understanding of the same.

My claim is that the degree to which characters have insight into their identity in relation to the events within a play is the degree to which they are able to transcend Fortune, Fate, and even the Divine. (They transcend the Divine in the sense that the highest order is no longer understood to be a judge from “beyond,” but is instead understood as the community that interprets their acts.) This claim is based on how Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* works. In that work, the degree to which consciousness reveals its insight into the mediating character of a dialectical concept in which it is caught, reveals the degree to which it is able to exceed that dialectical unity. As I mentioned, the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is itself a tragedy (a “path of despair”) until the final resolution in the last chapter, which makes it, in the end, a comedy.²³ To understand how this saving insight arises for dramatic characters (and not just for consciousness in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*), we have to revisit the notions of immediate being-in-itself, mediation through the recollected in-itself, and its conversion into being-for-itself, all in terms of dramatic identity.

I begin with the second moment, the “recollected in-itself,” since characters who are caught up in how things appear immediately to them are not self-conscious enough to bother with.²⁴

First-Order Negation: The Ability to Negate Appearance-Based Identities and to Run the Show

The ability to negate, to recollect the familiar and convert it to one’s use, is essentially the comedian’s ability to recognize a mask, and to put it on and take it off at will. In the tragedies, the characters who can do this and who can, as a result, also direct the world of appearances, are characters that enact at least this first order negation. That is, they recognize their own identity as negated; they are not who they are and they know it.

These kinds of characters fall into two camps: They are either evil or good. Iago says outright “I am not what I am”²⁵ and his evil lies precisely in that

fact. But in *King Lear*, both the fool and Edgar (disguised as Poor Tom), are also not what they seem to be. Indeed Edgar says "Edgar I nothing am."²⁶ In their cases, not being what they are, is for the good. Lear in his madness—that is, when Lear is not himself—recognizes the Fool and Poor Tom to be wise, referring to them as just judges and wise men. However, in order to be negation for the good, there must be a further, second-order negation. I will discuss this shortly.²⁷ For now, let us look more carefully at first-order negations.

Just as Iago sets the scenes between Desdemona and Cassio for Othello to interpret, in *King Lear*, Edmund is able to set the stage for Gloucester, his father, to think Edgar, his brother, a traitor. Edmund directs the world of appearances so that everything lines up in his favor. In the end, however, like Iago, Edmund gets caught in his own devises.

One of the characteristics of first-order negation characters is that, initially, they see themselves as being above Fortune. Thus at the start of the play, Edmund rejects the position of the stars as a reason for his having been born a bastard:

This is the excellent foppery of the world, that, when we are sick in fortune . . . we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and stars; as if we were villains on necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and treachers, by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars, and adulterers, by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on. An admirable evasion of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish disposition on the charge of a star! My father compounded with my mother under the Dragon's tail, and my nativity was under Ursa Major, so that it follows, I am rough and lecherous. Fut! I should have been that I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing.²⁸

But at the end of the play, once his gig is up and he lies dying, Edmund says that it is Fortune that has turned against him: "'tis true; / The wheel is come full circle!"²⁹ Since for the Elizabethans, Providence has a hand in directing Fortune, Edmund was not completely wrong to think that his soul was not subject to the stars. But Edmund's conscience was not governed by a higher necessity. He thought that plotting the course of things for his own benefit was enough. To the Elizabethan mind, that makes him morally reprehensible and thus all the more subject to a Fortune not governed by grace.

What Edmund did not realize, and that Edgar ultimately does, is that identity is mediated by the Divine (or for Hegelians, by the Concept—the negation of the negation). Edmund has moved from immediacy to the recollected in-itself, but he has not converted the recollected in-itself into the comprehensive unfolding of Being in-itself.

Second-Order Negation: Negation of the Negation—Sacrificing the Show to the Community's Interpretation

Negation of negation means that the alienation initiated by the first negation is overcome in a positive resolution. It is the ability, as Hegel says of "Absolute Spirit," to sacrifice oneself into free contingent happening. It is the reuniting of the subject with nature. Neither Iago nor Edmund were capable of such sacrifice. Iago's inability is present in his own credulity: His hatred of Othello stems from the fact that someone told Iago that Othello had slept with Iago's wife.³⁰ Thus despite being able to *not be* who he appears to be, Iago is caught up in the dramatic action. For someone to negate the negation, he or she has to have a clear understanding of his or her dramatic identity, and to be able to step in and out of it at will, as necessity dictates.

Edgar, Edmund's brother in *King Lear*, exemplifies a second-order negation. Edgar puts on several disguises, and by virtue of his ability to be other than he is, he survives in a plot that ends with the corpse of almost every main character strewn on the stage.

Edgar does not just disguise himself for his own benefit. By means of his disguises he is able to lead his blind father, Gloucester, to safety. Indeed, in misleading Gloucester to believe that Gloucester had jumped off the cliffs of Dover and survived, disguised Edgar provides Gloucester with a negation through which Gloucester feels himself transfigured.

Like Iago and Edmund, Edgar's disguises, and his deception about the cliff, play on the blindness of those who take immediacy to be the true. But unlike Edmund, Edgar is able not only to not be who he is, he is also able to see that his disguises play themselves out in the community and that they therefore cannot be constrained by the logic of his own ego. The Elizabethan consciousness might well have seen in Edgar a man on whom Providence was smiling, a man whose sacrifices of identity exhibited grace rather than cunning. For Christian Hegelians this might mean that what Edgar got right was the realization of the Concept as the ability of the individual to recollect himself in and through God. Left-wing Hegelians would say that Edgar got it right because he realized that he is able to negate his first negation in favour of a more comprehensive dramatic action involving the good of the community.

Another case of second-order negation is Rosalind in *As You Like It*. In that comedy, Rosalind disguises herself as a boy (Ganymede). She does so in order to coach the man who has stolen her heart on how he should woo the woman who has stolen his heart (which woman is no other than Rosalind herself). In this case, there is the further irony for us that the actor playing Rosalind would, in Shakespeare's time, have been a boy dressed up as a girl dressed up as a boy.³¹ Another case is Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, who disguises herself as a (male) law clerk (Balthasar) in order to save her lover's friend from injury. (The same irony applies here.)

Like Edgar, the good brought to the community by Rosalind comes through the role that the disguise plays: By means of it she achieves a number of things, most importantly a happy resolution to the plot. Her disguise operates much the way Edgar's does: It leads Orlando (who was blind to the truth) to a higher realization of the nature of love. Unlike Edgar, however, Rosalind also brings good to the community in a broader sense by means of her comic engagement and language. That belongs more to third-order negation and so I will discuss that shortly.

Portia's "good of the community" (overturning the punishment of "a pound of flesh") is unfortunately paired with her cruel, anti-Semitic ruling that Shylock must convert to Christianity. This does not undo the fact that the good that she does achieve is due to the fact that she was able to negate her character and become someone she was not in order to orchestrate the scene for the benefit of others. But we cannot simply dismiss her use of the power of disguise for anti-Semitic ends. It forces a very important point.

Portia's anti-Semitism and, we might add, Rosalind's sometimes backward and outdated declarations of what women are and what pleases them,³² indicate that their moral imaginations are compromised by social bias. This puts pressure on the idea that double negation is all that is necessary for doing good and calls for an important qualification: The "good" accomplished (and the moral imagination behind the achievement of that good) has stages of development. I discuss the relationship of the individual's concept of good in relationship to the good of the community and developments in the notion of that good later.³³ My discussion here aims only to show that second-order negation is necessary for individual self-consciousness to achieve its good (even if that good is not [yet] the ultimate good that a society can provide).

I will return to this negation of negation shortly. For contrast, let us look at:

Forms of Negation or Mediation That Don't Work

A first case involves characters who refuse altogether to have an identity in relation to the dramatic action, like King Lear's earnest daughter, Cordelia, the queen of "nothing," do not fair well because they do not enter into mediation.³⁴

A second case involves characters who base their identity on faulty notions of causality rather than laboring with the Concept get caught in their own narratives. Two examples of this are King Claudius and Polonius in Hamlet. Let us examine this.

Claudius's commonsense empiricism is evident early on, when he attempts to make Hamlet stop mourning Hamlet senior's death. "But you must know your father lost a father; / That father lost, lost his;" Claudius urges that mourning must give over to common sense.

For what we must know must be, and is as common
 As any the most vulgar thing to sense,
 Why should we in our peevish opposition
 Take it to heart? Fie, 'tis a fault to heaven,
 A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
 To reason most absurd, whose common theme
 Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried
 From the first corpse till he that died today,
 'This must be so.'³⁵

Claudius' empirical flat-footedness about the course of things exhibits a failure to understand the depth of experience. It leads to a superficial notion of identity and personal efficacy.

Polonius also appeals to common sense when he tries to explain the causes of Hamlet's madness. Having figured out that Hamlet loved Ophelia, Polonius explains to Ophelia that Hamlet was out of her league and that she should stay away from him. "Which done" Polonius explains to the King,

she took the fruits of my advice,
 And he [Hamlet], repulsed—a short tale to make—
 Fell into a sadness, then into a fast,
 Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness,
 Thence to a lightness, and, by this declension,
 Into the madness wherein now he raves,
 And all we wail for.³⁶

Such empirical minds have no other way to check their conclusions than to observe, and this is what Claudius and Polonius do to confirm their theory of Hamlet's madness. It is in one of these moments of spying that Polonius is struck dead behind the curtain.

Thus the belief that viewing a scene will give one immediate access to the truth, and the corresponding attempt to gain perfect insight by taking up a position outside the dramatic action, leads to confusion and death. This is not bad luck, it is the necessity embedded in that kind of consciousness.

A third way of organizing one's dramatic identity the wrong way is to see it as a function of magic. Othello gets himself really twisted up about Desdemona when he brings up the meaning of the handkerchief he gave to her and which he believes she has given away to Cassio.

Desdemona: "I have it not about me."
 Othello: "Not?"
 Desdemona: "No, faith, my lord."
 Othello: "That's a fault. That handkerchief

Did an Egyptian to my mother give.
 She was a charmer, and could almost read
 The thoughts of people. She told her, while she kept it
 'Twould make her amiable, and subdue my father
 Entirely to her love; but if she lost it,
 Or made a gift of it, my father's eye
 Should hold her loathed, and his spirits should hunt
 After new fancies. She, dying, gave it me . . .

'Tis true. There's magic in the web of it.
 A sibyl that had numbered in the world
 The sun to course two hundred compasses
 In her prophetic fury sewed the work.
 The worms were hallowed that did breed the silk,
 And it was dyed in mummy. . . ."³⁷

For Othello, Desdemona's apparent loss of the magical handkerchief makes the indictments against her are all the more powerful.

This kind of consciousness takes magical mediation, rather than negation, to be primary in explaining dramatic identity. The web of dramatic action based on magic, like that based on voyeuristic empiricism, leads to confusion and death.

One of the most interesting cases of magic as mediation is Prospero's use of it to control the events on the island in the *Tempest*. I discuss this play in detail in Chapter 11.

Third-Order Negation: Comic Mediation (A Comprehensive Sacrifice/Play of Dramatic Identity).

According to Hegel, comedy is "joyful self-contentment."³⁸ Comic characters are always already separate from their masks. I mentioned above that Rosalind—unlike Edgar—generates goodness through her comic interlocations as well as through her disguise. This is evident, for example, in her discussion with Jaques about melancholy and the insight gained from travel. Witty Jaques defends his melancholia. But this reveals his wit to be ironic rather than truly comic. Hegel rejects irony ("the most inartistic of all principles") in favor of comedy.³⁹ So does Rosalind. She exhibits a truly comic spirit (rather than witty madness or irony). In her disguise and contentment, she, unlike Jaques, is *practically* insightful. She playfully chastises him on this score: "to have seen much and to have nothing is to have rich eyes and poor hands."⁴⁰ She is winking at the audience as much as poking fun at Jaques.

Third-order negation is evident through more than witty dialogue in a play. Something more is going on. The best play to use to illustrate third-order negation is *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

At the end of that play, Puck (like Prospero at the end of the *Tempest*) steps out of the play and presents his epilogue while still in costume. This shows that the apparent wall between his dramatic identity and the audience is not solid. The effect is that in comedy we feel that "All the world's a stage."⁴¹ But we do not feel this as an ironic distancing (as Jaques does when he utters those words in *As You Like It*). Rather, at the end of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the experience of the world as stage is a happy, self-knowing realization on the part of the character *and* of the audience. It is the recognition that we are all engaged in negations of negations.

Indeed, the entire play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* does its best to not stay within the confines of drama. Puns, wordplays of various sorts, changes of rhythm, accidents, all these make the characters exceed their dramatic identities and convert their aims into funny calamities. The play within the play, "Pyramus and Thisbe," performed before the royal audience of Athens in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, is a play that is not a play. The whole performance of Pyramus and Thisbe enacts first-order negation. In it the characters go out of their way to explain to the royal audience who they are and what they represent. Thus in preparing for the play ahead of time, Bottom says to Quince: "I have a device to make all well. Write me a prologue, and let the prologue seem to say we will do no harm with our swords, and that Pyramus is not killed indeed; and for the more better assurance, tell them that I, Pyramus, am not Pyramus, but Bottom the weaver. This will put them out of fear."⁴² And then to assure the audience that the lion is not dangerous Snout suggests: "Therefore another prologue must tell he is not a lion." And Bottom advises him to say: "'... If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life. No, I am no such thing. I am a man, as other men are'—and there, indeed, [says Bottom,] let him name his name, and tell them plainly he is Snug the joiner."⁴³

When the players actually stage "Pyramus and Thisbe" for the royal audience, their naïve insistence is hilarious:

Snout: "In this same interlude it doth befall
That I, one Snout by name, present a wall;
And such a wall as I would have you think
That had in it a crannied hole or chink,
Through which the lovers Pyramus and Thisbe
Did whisper often"⁴⁴

And later Starveling says "This lantern doth the horned moon present. / Myself the man i'th' moon do seem to be. . . . All that I have to say is to tell you that

the lantern is the moon, I the man i'th' moon, this thorn bush my thorn bush, and this dog my dog.”⁴⁵

These characters are so much not what they are, that the unity of action is shot through with negation.

On top of this, there is a constant interruption of the play as characters step out of their persona and speak to the royalty who are their audience. For example, Bottom interrupts his own dramatic action as Pyramus to tell the audience that Thisbe is to return at the next line.⁴⁶ And the royal audience to the play is constantly interrupting the play with their jokes about it.

The overall effect is that the performance is permeated with negation and very funny. The wall separating dramatic action and the audience is not really a wall at all. It is man representing a wall, and the wall has a chink through which characters and audience speak to each other.

Conclusion

Good luck is not what makes for survival in tragedy or for happy resolutions in comedy. Rather, our insight into dramatic identity, or more specifically, our insight into the collisions and the roles into which these cast us, combined with our ability and willingness to playfully mediate dramatic action for the benefit of the community, is what makes the difference between tragic and comic outcomes. Applying Hegel's lessons to the world stage, we see that it involves negating the familiar, turning it into a mask (the recollected in-itself), and converting that into dramatic action, or being-for-self, in the deepest and most expansive way. To be able to do this is no trick of fate, nor turn of luck. One must perform the labor of the Concept and have traversed the forms. We are all still laboring, but, thanks to Hegel and Shakespeare, our experience of the process is deeper and we can laugh at ourselves a little more.

This framework nonetheless leaves many unanswered questions and topics to discuss. Among them are: an investigation into social pressures that define the fabric of the man; the powers that drive us further into tragedy and away from comedic resolution; an analysis of phenomenological elements involved in transitions from fateful tragedy to self-knowing directedness; a discussion of societal breadths and levels of wit; and the difference between tragic sovereignty, comedic sovereignty, and philosophical sovereignty. I take up these in the chapters ahead.

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Chapter 2

Tearing the Fabric

Hegel's *Antigone*, Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, and Kinship-State Conflict¹

Introduction

We ended the last chapter with the idea—present in comedy as well as in a properly self-conscious society—that the wall separating our dramas from our audiences is porous. The wall is something we “put on” like a disguise and something we “speak through” like a mask. Another word for this wall is “fabric.” This word has both ontological and psychological connotations. It can mean cloth or building or more subjectively, a fabrication of the mind.² In tragedy, as we have seen, the fabric of things often appears impenetrable until it is too late—for example, Polonius behind the curtain, or Othello’s interpretation of the handkerchief.

In the chapters ahead, we revisit and develop various kinds of fabric: from building, sculpture, and body fabrics, to political fabric; from ghosts and fabrications of madness to the fabrics of cloth, culture, and dialectical syntheses.

In this chapter, we are concerned with the Kinship-State relation. In particular, we look at how conflicts between these tear the social fabric that Hegel calls “Ethical Substance.”³

Sophocles’ character *Antigone* and Shakespeare’s character *Coriolanus* each embody Kinship-State conflicts that lead to their death.⁴ This chapter discusses the ethical “fabric” of these two dramatic bodies, in the context of Hegel’s Kinship-State dialectic in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and using Judith Butler’s critique of Hegel’s reading of *Antigone*, in her book *Antigone’s Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death*.⁵

My conclusion is that Coriolanus, not Antigone, best characterizes the fallen individual in Hegel's account of the demise of Ethical Substance.⁶ Coriolanus is incapable of escaping the Kinship-State (Oedipal/homosocial) collisions that his fabric represents, whereas Antigone, with her Oedipal, performative tears in the fabric of Kinship and State, is someone we must remember as always already beyond Ethical Substance. We thereby also challenge the apparently necessary disappearance of woman from Hegel's dialectic after his account of Ethical Substance in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.⁷

Part I

Coriolanus is the locus of a collision involving the State, Kinship, and desire. On the one hand, Coriolanus' body belongs to the State. He is the son who must, according to Hegel's discussion of Ethical Substance, leave the family to serve the State in war. As a soldier, his body is a State machine. He receives his name from the State, a name taken from the city he conquers ("Corioles"). On the other hand, his body belongs to his mother. He is the son of Volumnia, who sees in him only his war wounds, who counts their rising number with pride, and who would be happy if he returned to the family in a coffin, having died heroically for Rome. Her failure to see her son in Coriolanus (rather than a mirror for her own status) is at the root of Coriolanus' inability to communicate (with) his own desire. The only way he can have his own desire met is in the deeply private battleground of enemy's sword cutting his flesh. Coriolanus accesses his desire through a death drive that fuels his fearlessness in battle. He is particularly happy facing his main enemy Aufidius, with whom battles bear a homoerotic character.⁸

The confluence of these desires, represented in the wound marks on his body, is something he cannot bear to reveal to the public eye. When the State calls for Coriolanus to take up a political position as a Consul of Rome, he is conflicted. For to become Consul he must first go before the people, show them his wounds, and receive their consent. The people must "lend their tongues to his wounds" ("we [the people] are to put our tongues into those wounds and speak for them"). Coriolanus' unwillingness to allow for that political performativity is founded on the complex meaning of his wounds: Like vaginas, these slashes represent his (mother's) desire, as well as his desire for her pleasure; they are therefore emblems of an Oedipal desire in him; but as masculine, battle penetrations of his body, they also represent the homosociality of State appropriation. They represent and are the entrances of (his) multifaceted desires. He does not want tongues to give these wounds voice in any way. He resists the performative character of his wounds, of his desire.

He reluctantly goes through the process of showing his wounds, but his unwillingness to let the public tongues enter and speak for (or in place of) his

desire(s) is evident to the people. His conflict becomes externalized in that he rants against the weakness of the people. They realize he cannot speak for them and that he is in fact a threat. So Coriolanus is banished. He goes to his enemy Aufidius and together they attack Rome. At the pleas of his mother, however, Coriolanus abandons the attack and in the midst of establishing reconciliation between Rome and its enemy, he is murdered by Aufidius. Coriolanus' death is a kind of a suicide, for when he gives in to his mother's pleas to end the war, he knows he has signed his own death warrant.

Coriolanus' wounds are tears in his body in which the State's desires, his mother, and his Oedipal desires find their virtual materiality. These tears in his fabric are the source of his potential political success, but as performatives of homosocial and incestuous desires, they are unconsciously unacceptable to him (and to his society) and thus make political success impossible for him. It is the impossibility of properly communicating his wounds that leads to his death.

Now let us turn to Hegel's account of Sophocles' *Antigone* in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. According to Hegel, this play sets the two sides of Ethical Substance—the Divine Law and the State Law—against each other. The Divine Law concerns kinship and the preservation of the individual as a family member. It involves in particular the preservation of the memory of that individual through burial rites. The State or Human Law oversees the departure of the individual from the family and into civil life. Both laws are grasped as immediate and necessary.

These laws come into conflict when Antigone, who represents the Divine Law of the family, defies Creon, who represents the State Law. Creon had ordered that Antigone's brother, Polyneices not be buried since he had acted against the city. Antigone contravenes this order by throwing dust on her brother's body as an act of burial.

That virtual "grave," a would-be material tear in the earth, is also a tear in the Ethical Substance. For it is the site of the rupture between the Divine and Human Laws. In the *Phenomenology*, the dialectical development from this point of rupture eventually leads society to overcome this tear in the Kinship-State dialectic: Ethical Substance is sublated (negated and raised) into a higher level of communal self-understanding; Divine and Human Laws are replaced by Roman legalism in which each member of society is an atom of civil rights.¹⁰

The individuals who embody the opposition that makes up Ethical Substance are destroyed along with Ethical Substance: Antigone is imprisoned in a cave, where she commits suicide; the news of her death destroys Creon's son (her fiancé), which in turn leads to the death of Creon's wife. Creon's world (if not himself) is destroyed. The fabric of society is torn.

But Hegel's account of the necessary downfall of Ethical Substance is often read as particularly censoring of women. Antigone, representative of the family order, must give way to the State as the Kinship-State dialectic develops into more complex forms of social life. Ethical Substance's Oedipal-State

wound gives birth to the next moment in the dialectical progression of society by negating woman: She, the “eternal irony” toward the State, is buried in the dialectic. Benhabib therefore concludes that “Hegel . . . is women’s gravedigger, confining them to a grand but ultimately doomed phase of the dialectic, which ‘befalls mind in its infancy.’”¹¹ Butler writes that in the final development, “[t]he state now substitutes itself for womankind, and that figure of woman is at once absorbed and jettisoned. . . . Whoever she [Antigone] is, she is, quite obviously, left behind for war, left behind for the homosociality of state desire.”¹²

Butler opposes Hegel’s account of Antigone. She shows that, although Antigone dies, her spirit is the one that has always already sublated Ethical Substance. Butler’s larger concern is the kinds of desires and lives that are liveable within the “reigning epistemes of cultural intelligibility.”¹³ Antigone is a case that helps us look into this:

Antigone represents not kinship in its ideal form but its deformation and displacement, one that puts the reigning regimes of representation into crisis and raises the question of what the conditions of intelligibility could have been that would have made her life possible, indeed, what sustaining web of relations makes our lives possible, those of us who confound kinship in the rearticulation of its terms?¹⁴

Butler relocates what I am calling “the tear in the political fabric” to Antigone’s body. Antigone can hardly represent the norm of familial relations since she is the daughter of Oedipus and Jocasta (Oedipus’ mother), and is thus the product of incest. We can speak of Coriolanus in the way Butler does of Antigone, for he too “represents not kinship in its ideal form but its deformation and displacement, one that puts the reigning regimes of representation into crisis.”¹⁵ Indeed, sorting out the similarities and differences of Butler’s Antigone and our reading of Coriolanus is helpful.

Like Coriolanus, Antigone is the body of wounds: She is passively the virtual materiality of others’ desires. As the daughter of incest, she embodies a tear in the fabric of kinship.

But *unlike* Coriolanus, Antigone is not *only* the body of a wound and *destined* to die in an intractable Oedipal and political crisis. Rather, in her burial of her brother, she is the *active* embodiment of difference and desire.¹⁶ Butler recognizes the “tear” to be Antigone’s *performance* of the burial and her *utterances* about it.¹⁷ Butler shows that Antigone thereby successfully, consciously ruptures a faulty political order. So Antigone’s willingness to speak and act her desire makes her words performative in a way that Coriolanus’ are not and she makes her actions heroic in ways that Coriolanus’ cannot be.

Finally, Antigone's *society*, unlike Antigone herself but *like* Coriolanus and his society, cannot recognize differences in (its) desires and therefore must, like Coriolanus' political fabric, fall.

If Hegel did not want his tear-figure to survive the dialectical collisions of Ethical Substance, he should have used Coriolanus, not Antigone. For, first, as Butler argues, Antigone's spirit survives: She cannot but resurface as a necessary figure of political reform; again following Butler's lead, Antigone is what I refer to as (a) tearing (in) the fabric of cultural intelligibility; she represents a wound that is not only a virtual materiality of identity and difference but its effective performance as well. Secondly, Coriolanus *does not* survive the intractable Oedipal Kinship-State conflict of Hegel's Ethical Substance. He is destroyed by the tear in the fabric of his identity. Coriolanus, not Antigone, represents the death of the individual as it is defined by Ethical Substance. Now let us turn to the arguments behind these claims.

Part II

In suggesting Coriolanus as an alternative figure, I am dispensing with the role of gender that Hegel thinks is essential in Kinship-State relations.¹⁸ My first task is therefore to address why the dialectic does not need to specify which gender plays what role.

The central opposition Hegel uses is not between woman and man, but between the Divine Law and the Human Law. A student of mine pointed out the following parallel following the attack on the World Trade Center on 9/11. Firemen working at Ground "0" were outraged at the order to stop looking for their comrades' and kin's bodies. The conflict was the same kind as we see in *Antigone*: the right to honour and bury the dead (bodies) versus a requirement of the State not to (any longer). Conflicts at this level are not gender-specific. They have to do with individuals' and the community's need to restore the dignity of the dead through some sort of ritual involvement with the body.

This is not to say that sexuality is absent in such conflicts. On the contrary, sexual identity and desire cannot be separated from kinship. But there are complex varieties to be observed. One variety of psychosocial complexity that can arise is evident in *Coriolanus*, particularly in the way that Coriolanus embodies the Divine and the Human Laws and in how these tear him apart. So let me turn to that now.

Coriolanus does not fear being a dead body (indeed a heroic death is part of his mother's desire). His struggle concerns the wounds in his body, and the tongues that should speak through them, whether his own or those of others. His wounds and the conflicting tongues about them are evidence not just of his warriorship, but of the collisions within his body that tear him apart and

threaten the polis. The collisions in Coriolanus ultimately tear his fabric (the Ethical Substance's political body). Let us look more at these collisions.

The Collision of Divine Law and Human Law

The overarching collision in Coriolanus is between the Divine Law and the Human Law. Following the Divine Law of his heart, he seeks to safeguard his gashes (and thus his desires) instead of exposing them to the public for participation in the Human Law. He also tries to enforce the right to his individuality against the Human Law by letting his anger rage against the people.¹⁹ There are multiple levels of conflict here. Let us begin by looking at the obvious one between Divine Law and Human Law.

The conflict between Coriolanus the desiring individual and Coriolanus the State warrior is consistent with Hegel's description of the conflict in Ethical Substance:

[T]hat consciousness which belongs to the divine law sees in the other side only the violence of human caprice, while that which holds to human law sees in the other only the self-will and disobedience of the individual who insists on being his own authority. For the commands of government have a universal, public meaning open to the light of day; the will of the other law, however, is locked up in the darkness of the nether regions, and in its outer existence manifests as the will of an isolated individual which, as contradicting the first, is a wanton outrage.²⁰

The Collision of Coriolanus with Himself as Woman (and Upholder of Divine Law)

As I mentioned above, Coriolanus' wounds are like vaginas in the sense that they represent his mother's desire. In this sense, Coriolanus is (also) a woman. His role, like woman's role in Hegel's account, is to safeguard the Divine Law.²¹

Given this, Coriolanus' particular kind of sexual complexities create a level of conflict within him that is not just Divine versus Human Law. On the one hand, he has female identifications and in his case they are linked to the Divine Law's safeguarding of the individual against the community. On the other, he is unwilling to recognize them and therefore has a problem giving them voice (his own or others').

Coriolanus' *expressed, ostensible* unwillingness to show his wounds is that he is more worthy than the citizens and that requesting the voice of the citizens diminishes his autonomy and stature. Before he goes to the market to exhibit his

wounds, Coriolanus privately heaps ridicule and disdain on his fellow citizens, accusing them of running away in war time; he sneers to Menenius "Bid them wash their faces / And keep their teeth clean."²²

At a deeper level, Coriolanus is conflicted by the interpretation of his wounds as female genitalia (as the desire of his mother and for his mother's desire). This is evident in his portrayal of the process of revealing his wounds for popular vote as a form of prostitution:

Better it is to die, better to starve,
Than crave the hire which first we do deserve.
Why in this womanish toge should I stand here
To beg of Hob and Dick that does appear
Their needless vouches? Custom calls me to't.²³

Coriolanus even plays the role, saying to a First Citizen: "Kindly sir, I pray let me ha't. I have wounds to show you which shall be yours in private."²⁴

Coriolanus' conflict is in part that the society in which he lives (which seeks the wounds not for what they are to Coriolanus but only for what they mean to the State) has an equally insufficient concept of sexuality and the role of kinship in establishing sexuality. Both Coriolanus and his society—or as I have been arguing, Coriolanus as the fabric of society—exhibit the way that Ethical Substance takes its immediate, uncomplicated norms as truths. Coriolanus and his folk are living in that kind of immediacy. In this sense, he is a perfect case for representing the failure of Ethical Substance.

Antigone, unlike Coriolanus, already has tongues in her wound: She is publicly known to be the offspring of incest; she always already bears her Oedipal transgressions and unintelligibilities as public facts about her self and her body. She exceeds the one-sidedness that Hegel needs in his account of the opposition in Ethical Substance and is therefore not a good case for Hegel to use.

The Collision Is Part of the Fabric of Coriolanus' Body as Body Politic;
It Involves Making the Body Speak

Hegel writes that the real collision in Ethical Action is not passion against duty or duty against duty.²⁵ Rather, it is "an unfortunate collision of duty merely with a reality which possesses no rights of its own."²⁶ It is one character against this reality.²⁷ The basic collision in *Coriolanus* is that of Coriolanus with the People: That collision is explained in the stand-off between them at the opening of the play. It is brought to fruition in Act 3.3 and resolved in Act 5.

However, that collision itself is from the start figured as being in the "body politic." Menenius explains to a citizen how the people are to be understood

within the State, using the allegory of the body. "There was a time when all the body's members, / Rebelled against the belly, thus accused it. . . ." ²⁸ The citizen joins in:

"Your belly's answer—what?
The kingly crownèd head, the vigilant eye,
The counsellor heart, the arm our soldier,
Our steed the leg, the tongue our trumpeter,
With other muniments and petty helps
In this our fabric . . . " ²⁹

A further division is then made within that political body. This division is between body-speech and regular speech. The citizen asks Menenius, "what answer made the belly?" and Menenius replies "Sir, I shall tell you. With a kind of smile, / . . . I may make the belly smile / As well as speak." ³⁰

What is being articulated is not just a collision of parts of the body politic: The more subtle collision within that is between speech and the body, and more specifically, the problem of having the body be able to speak.

In the play, this allegory of the body politic, its subtlety and conflicts, transfer to Coriolanus' body. His body represents the social fabric at issue and his main problem is how to let it speak.

In Coriolanus, the opposition of the belly to the rest of the body is the opposition between the rabble of his flesh (the individual's heart and desires), and that which is to express his body to the polis—his tongue as political tool.

Coriolanus' inwardly conflicted body cannot speak properly. His words are forever coming into conflict with others and with himself; his tongue is his worst enemy. Because of the confusion of speech that results, Coriolanus' body, his fabric—his body as political fabrication—is that against which he constantly and heroically takes up arms.

Since this is not a battle of one body against another, but rather of one law in the body against another law in the body, Coriolanus cannot win by the force of arms. His tongue is traitor to his desires. He cannot but end in tragic death, penetrated by the sword. ³¹

Let us look at these three points individually and then compare them with Antigone.

Tongues and Wounds. We have seen how the political structure of a body with parts is made explicit in the play. We noted it in the speech about the body politic and in Shakespeare's use of the "tongue" to represent speech. (Other examples: "These are the tribunes of the people / The tongues o'th' common mouth;" ³² and elsewhere, Menenius advises Coriolanus "Put not your worthy

rage into your tongue.”³³) It is also clear in the use of wounds as evidence of political allegiance and entitlement to political reward. The union of tongues and wounds expresses the people’s desire. As we have seen, in Coriolanus’ case, this union would mean their giving their consent to Coriolanus becoming their Consul. The citizen says “we [the people] are to put our tongues into those wounds [Coriolanus’] and speak for them.”³⁴

The Name of Death. The relationship between tongues and political approval finds its battleground in Coriolanus. He does not want others’ tongues in his wounds; he is conflicted about his own tongue because it gets him in trouble; he is constantly asked to temper his tongue; and he is even asked to alienate himself from his tongue by using it to win over the people.

When his desire finds his tongue, he angers the body politic and alienates their desire. When this happens, Menenius says something very important of him: “His heart’s his mouth / What his breast forges, that his tongue must vent, / And, being angry, *does forget that ever / He heard the name of death.*”³⁵ The link between tongue (speech) and death needs to be examined further.

It is in the performance of his tongue that the play’s real collision finds expression. When his mother asks Coriolanus to speak disingenuously to the people, he is torn apart internally. For the request means that he turn his political body against his desire, his tongue against his heart. Voluminia says to Coriolanus:

... it lies you on to speak to th’ people,
Not by your own instruction, nor by th’ matter
Which your heart prompts you, but with such words
That are but roted in your tongue, though but
Bastards and syllables of no allowance
To your bosom’s truth³⁶

Coriolanus is temporarily convinced. Again, he views himself as a prostitute: “Well, I must do’t. / Away, my disposition; and possess me / Some harlot’s spirit! / My throat of war be turned, / Which choired with my drum, into a pipe / Small as an eunuch or the virgin voice.”³⁷ In the end, he is unable to perform this act: It would be too great a perversion of his self.

This is where the conflict between the Divine Law and the Human Law becomes most complex. For Coriolanus both supports the Divine Law and is at odds with it. This is a fourth kind of collision, one stemming out of the performative nature of Divine Law. Let me explain.

At an unconscious level, Coriolanus is safeguarding the Divine Law. He does so in so far as he does not want to show his wounds to the public, or

speak his desires openly, or, when he does speak, when he does not want to be other than his own individual self. Coriolanus thereby protects the familial, sexed, desiring body from being taken up by the public in a way that would turn his body and speech into abstract heroic signs and instruments of political utility.

But in another way, Coriolanus is therefore also at odds with the Divine Law. For his self-protection values his ego rather than respects the role of negation in the community. He is earnestly distant and ironic. He is distaining in the way for which Hegel criticises the Romantics.³⁸ Coriolanus becomes separated from the crowd by his lofty concept of his virtue; he turns his back on those banishing him.

This distancing is a further sign that he himself has not come to terms with the social complexity of his desires. He mistakes Divine Law for subjective interiority rather than realizing that the truth of the Divine Law is that it is a function of desire and therefore involves his individuality in others. His irony is contrary to the Divine Law because the Divine Law is not something purely subjective. For Hegel, the Divine and the Human Law are inseparable. (As we shall see, this cuts both ways: the irony of the community is not overcome by the community opposing it. In any dialectical progression after the demise of Ethical Substance, irony and community are equally transformed by each other.)

The truth of the Divine Law is the desire of and for individuality. Its role in Ethical Substance is first to mediate the negation of the individual (his death) back into the community of the family. This concerns the individual's death and his sublation back through burial: The dead individual is brought back into the social fabric as remembered ancestry. But secondly, the Divine law mediates the negation which the individual, as a desiring self, is. In this respect, Divine Law concerns controlling the individual's desire in relation to the rest of the community including the State. The most significant expression of this is that the death of the individual is demanded as service in war. In Hegel's account, war allows the State to control the threat of independence on the part of individuals and ideological assemblies.³⁹

The Divine Law therefore mediates the negation of the individual by sublating him or her into his or her family and State.

The Divine Law concerns the death of the individual and his or her death's sublation into social fabric as family memory and/or soldier of State. This role of death in society is what Hegel calls the "negative essence" of the Divine Law. According to Hegel, "[t]he negative essence shows itself to be the real power of community and the force of its self-preservation. The community therefore possesses the truth and the confirmation of its power in the essence of the Divine Law and in the realm of the nether world."⁴⁰ Divine Law performs its role in the complex of desires that constitute the individual,

family, and State. Another expression for its negative essence could be “the name of death.”

In Coriolanus’ person, there is a collision of two functions of the Divine Law: Divine Law as safeguard of individuality against the State, and Divine Law as mediation of State desire for unity (the suppression of individuality). We see the collision when he speaks his anger and when he banishes the State in return for being banished. Let us look at each.

When Coriolanus speaks to the Tribune and then unleashes his tongue on the people,⁴¹ he stops safeguarding his interiority and lets his *heart* come into his mouth. He calls the people a “mutable rank-scented meinie [multitude]”⁴² and “crows” that “peck at the eagles.”⁴³

In speaking thus, it is said of him that he forgets that “ever / He heard the name of death.”⁴⁴ What Coriolanus is forgetting is the performative nature of the Divine Law and that that law is something expressed by the language he shares with his community. He takes himself to be the sole negating element, the ironic soldier, the dealer of death and definer of States, the one who speaks for all. He forgets that this negative essence is a name, something communal and performative, that it is something that came to him through language (he forgets that he “heard” it); he forgets that it is this name of death that defines him as individual *and* him as individual in his community. He forgets that the name of death, this negative essence, operates just as much in the State and for the State by safeguarding the State *against* the individual.

Coriolanus takes himself to be the privileged speaker. He demands that the Tribune be destroyed—that its “multitudinous tongue” be “plucked out.”⁴⁵

In forgetting that he ever heard the name of death, Coriolanus forgets that it is through language as well as rites that the Divine Law is performative, that such a law expresses life-affirming and life-ending consequences for the individual and community. This is why tongues—speech and voices—play such an important role in the play.

The name of death is not the only name Coriolanus forgets: He forgets the name of the man who was kind to him and whom he would like to have released from prison. Without the name they cannot find the man and release him.⁴⁶ Forgetting names short-circuits community because it interrupts the performance of language. In Coriolanus, this forgetting is an unconscious sabotage of community, a sabotaging that repeats the tear in his political fabric (the tear of no one being capable of speaking his wounds properly).

In speaking his heart, Coriolanus makes his desire for his individuality supervene upon the social. This threatens the necessary relationship between individual and community, between the Divine Law and State Law. Coriolanus never figures out that “the law of his own heart is the law of all hearts.”⁴⁷ His anger leads to dissolution of both sides rather than the sublation of both

into a higher order that incorporates each in a new way. As a result, he is banished, and he banishes the State. His raw hatred of the people is then fully exposed:

You common cry of curs! Whose breath I hate
As reek o'th'rotten fens, whose loves I prize
As the dead carcasses of unburied men
That do corrupt my air: I banish you!⁴⁸

In banishment, Coriolanus is like Woman in Hegel's account of Ethical Substance: He becomes the "eternal irony of the community." He identifies *himself* with the power of the State to bring about death; he ridicules the government; he makes his warrior status (which is inseparable from his desire to please his mother as well as his own private desire to penetrate and be penetrated by his enemy's sword) into the ruling figure; he banishes the State of Rome as an abstraction. All of this echoes Hegel's remarks about Womankind in Ethical Substance:

Womankind—the everlasting irony [in the life—ed.] of the community—changes by intrigue the universal end of the government into a private end, transforms its universal activity into a work of some particular individual, and perverts the universal property of the state into a possession and ornament for the Family. [Coriolanus makes the State into something that his private and in part Oedipal desire will conquer and possess—JB.] Woman in this way turns to ridicule the earnest wisdom of mature age [the name of death—JB] which, indifferent to purely private pleasures and enjoyments, as well as to playing an active part, only thinks and cares for the universal. She makes this wisdom an object of derision for raw and irresponsible youth and unworthy of their enthusiasm. In general, she maintains that it is the power of youth that really counts.⁴⁹

In other words, Hegel's Woman forgets the name of death and makes the boasting youth into the only power that matters. Coriolanus is both woman and youth in this passage. He has ironic stance and warrior pride. He is Coriolanus as woman—a man imbued with the irony afforded by his "wounds." And he is a warrior who threatens the State with dissolution.

In Hegel's account, the "youth" becomes that which the community makes stronger in its very efforts to suppress its individuality. The community finally gains control over the youth by sending him to war, where he "has his day and his worth is openly acknowledged."⁵⁰ In war, where contingency and chance govern, the individual loses kinship identity; this produces the individual as an

atomic unit. It marks the end of the Ethical Substance and the beginning of the atomism of citizens in the Roman "Legal Status."⁵¹

Coriolanus proceeds along the dialectic Hegel articulates here: He is ironic and he goes to war to die by the sword. But Coriolanus differs from Hegel's account of the end of Ethical Substance in that he goes to war against his own city. This repeats externally what is happening to him internally: He is at war with—indeed he is the collision of—the Kinship-State fabric that he represents. Here I part company with Hegel. For this—more than the youth at war and the silent disappearance of the ironic stance—is the downfall of Ethical Substance. Let us look further at the conflict.

I mentioned above that the interdependence of Divine and Human laws cut both ways. We can develop the other side now. Coriolanus is not entirely wrong to banish the State in return for its having banished him. The State binds its individuals to it through the negative essence of the Divine law, but the State is equally bound by the Divine Law. A State that fails to take cues from the Divine Law cannot survive (anymore than the individual who fails to recognize the communally performative nature of his desire can survive). In failing to recognize Divine Law, the State in its turn has forgotten the name of death. It has forgotten that Divine Law is the negative determination of individuality as well as of the State. In other words, in its forgetting the name of death, the State thinks only of the sacrifice of the individual for the desire of the State, not how the individual is determined by the limits and desires of Kinship. The State is wrong to view Coriolanus' wounds simply as a function of his service to the State. For the Divine Law dictates that his wounds be observed as functions of his individuality, and therefore as functions of *his* desire, as well as of State desire.

In the dialogue preceding his argument with the Tribune and people, Coriolanus invites an appreciation of his wounds as functions of *his* desire. He excitedly inquires about Aufidius' (his enemy's) advances and even whether Aufidius spoke of him. He yearns to go to Aufidius to fight.⁵² This dialogue is followed by Coriolanus' rant against the people for not pulling their weight in battle and therefore not deserving corn. That disdain and the claim of bravery on which that disdain is founded, is a cover for his private motives in war and for the hatred he feels for those who do not participate in what he means by the name of death. Similarly, when Volumnia quantifies Coriolanus' wounds she does not see his desire for battle and for Aufidius; by counting his wounds, she, like the State and the people, abrogates the Divine Law's protection of the individual's desire against State desire.) She forgets how the name of death performs within Coriolanus' complex of desires.

This forgetting on the part of the State means that the end is bad for Rome. But we do not see the tragedy of the State except insofar as the State is Coriolanus' body. The tragedy we witness is the falling fabric of Coriolanus the body politic.

The end of Sophocles' *Antigone* does express the tragedy of the State—Creon watches as every family member around him dies. This would *seem* to be an argument in favor of using *Antigone* to illustrate the downfall of the Ethical Substance. But that conclusion is based on the faulty premise that the Ethical Substance is the same thing as the State. In fact, it is not the same as the State: Ethical Substance is a collision of Divine and Human Laws that destroys those who hold them. The complexity of their collision is amply illustrated in the figure of Coriolanus.

Coriolanus Is a Falling Fabric. Coriolanus is largely an imagined figure, fabricated out of the enumeration of his wounds and named according to his victory in war. But this is only one side of him. Internally, his desire and rage place him beyond those calculations. He is therefore a site of collision, a body that must ultimately fall. When Coriolanus becomes enraged at the people's refusal to make him a Consul, Cominius remarks "But now 'tis odds beyond arithmetic, / And manhood is called foolery when it stands / Against a falling fabric."⁵³

Early in the play, the editors of Shakespeare's text explain that "fabric" means "body" and they later explain that it means "building."⁵⁴ This is apt for our reading of the play. For Coriolanus' body and identity are social fabrications. On the one hand, he is the body of the Classical Greek sculptures, a body which reveals the truth of the human form as god-like. In wartime action, he is epic, the symbol of all men. On the other, he is the interiority of the lyrical, desiring agent who seeks to speak his heart, who thinks that only his tongue can be in his wounds, a man who views politics as a monologue. If one puts these two sides together, one has a tragic figure: Coriolanus cannot properly inhabit his person without destroying his fabric.

The play persists as long as he struggles to hold the opposing forces apart. But when "Heaven op's" and he is reunited with Rome and his family (when he gives himself to his mother's desire), he gives up trying. The collisions then tear him apart and his fabric is destroyed.

In one sense, the State has simply exacted from Coriolanus the essence of the Divine Law for *it* (his death in war). The State controlled the independent individual and held the State in unity by pitching the individual (again) against a common foe (Aufidius). But the State has not recognized in Coriolanus the role of the Divine Law as that which keeps the individual an individual: it treated him as a functionary rather than as a member of a family (and a psychosexual, desiring being). In Coriolanus' person, the two aspects of the Divine Law (interiority and service to the State) as well as the Human Law are pitched against each other. His death is not a necessity of the State in wartime; it is a tragedy of the human.

In sum, Coriolanus' body and speech is the site of tears in the fabric of Kinship-State identity. In the complex relationship of his sexual/familial body to the State, in his collision-torn body politic, Coriolanus' identity and language become performatively unsustainable and he is therefore destroyed.

Comparing These Three Points with Antigone

Tongues and Wounds. Antigone has the advantage of having the tear be inside her body but already publicly expressed. She embodies a tear in kinship relations in that her body is not a product of the usual kinship bonds but is rather the product of incest. This is known by the public.

The tear she performs is outwardly the act of burial, but more importantly, it is a tear in her language. As Butler shows, Antigone's speech is catachresis.⁵⁵ It is catachresis because Oedipus' incest results in the linguistic fact that when Antigone says she must bury her "brother" it is always ambiguous who she means—her father or her father's son?⁵⁶ Unlike Coriolanus, she is conscious that her tongue is in a mouth of differences. "[S]he is transmitting more than one discourse at once."⁵⁷ She not only has public tongues in her wound, her wound challenges public norms of kinship identity; she necessarily acts and speaks differently.

...in acting, as one who has no right to act, she upsets the vocabulary of kinship that is a precondition of the human, implicitly raising the question for us of what those preconditions really must be. . . . If she is human, then the human has entered into catachresis: we no longer know its proper usage. And to the extent that she occupies the language that can never belong to her, she functions as a chiasm within the vocabulary of political norms. If kinship is the precondition of the human, then Antigone is the occasion for a new field of the human, achieved through political catachresis, the one that happens when the less than human speaks as human, when gender is displaced, and kinship founders on its own founding laws. . . . [Her] fatality exceeds her life and enters the discourse of intelligibility as its own promising fatality, the social form of its aberrant, unprecedented future.⁵⁸

The Name of Death. Coriolanus' conflicted spirit is something of which he is aware, but the source of the conflicts is in large part unconscious—forgotten and covered over by his disdain. His actions and speech seem to spring from certitude, but the truth is that they come from a complex origin. Antigone's conflicts and the origin of them are conscious to her from the beginning. She

knows she is the daughter of incest; and, unlike her father Oedipus (who commits his crimes without knowing), she commits her crime knowingly.⁵⁹

Coriolanus' desire is complex because it is persistently being hijacked by his mother's desire and by State desire. It is against the desires of others *in his body* that he acts. His attack against Rome is an effort to banish the desiring other's hold on his body and to express his own desire. His final capitulation to his mother—a capitulation he knows will result in his being murdered—is therefore a kind of suicide. He gives his desiring body to his mother and to Rome and abandons his struggle, and therein dies.

Antigone's suicide, on the other hand, is a heroic embracing of the ruptured identity she embodies and which includes the State and language. She does not try to protect herself, fail to and then capitulate. From the start, she boldly goes toward burying her brother, knowing that her act leads to her death. She has not "forgotten the name of death." She is fully in command of the performative nature of her communications, of how she mediates Divine and Human Law. She tears the fabric because she is inherently and self-consciously already a living tear in it. It is Coriolanus who is torn apart and destroyed.⁶⁰

Antigone Dies, But She Is Not a Fallen Fabric. I argue this despite the fact that in Sophocle's *Antigone*, Antigone is compared with fabrics that break. The chorus says that Antigone "does not know how to bend before troubles"⁶¹ to which Creon adds "overstubborn spirits are most often humbled. It is the stiffest iron, baked to hardness in the fire, that you will most often see snapped and shivered."⁶² Haemon also warns Antigone that she must "bend in season," like the tree that bends with the wind. Otherwise she, like the too taught sail of a ship in the storm will destroy the ship.⁶³

But she is not a fallen fabric. For the expressed nature of her tears affects the fabric of society differently than Coriolanus' inexpressible ones do his society. Like Coriolanus, Antigone's body is the site in which Kinship and State collide. But by burying her brother, she transposes the tear in Kinship to her society so that it is the site of collision. Creon failed to see the value of the Divine Law when it was in complex tension with the State. Antigone tears Creon's ethical world view. What is destroyed is the society that cannot accommodate alterity.

Unlike Antigone, who cannot *not* let the public into her tear, Coriolanus is reluctant to let the public into his wounds; he is reluctant to be penetrated by discourse, reluctant to recognize the performative, multitongued nature of body and speech. Unlike Antigone, but like her society, Coriolanus is *himself* torn apart.

In each case, the public is not informed enough to handle the psychosexual complexities, so for both Antigone and Coriolanus, the fabric of their society collapses. But only Coriolanus is himself the site of a tragic collision. Antigone is not a tragic figure. She is heroic.

In Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, what is central is that Coriolanus' individual fabric falls. In Sophocle's *Antigone*, it is the fabric of patriarchal, normative, social hegemony that falls. Butler therefore rightly uses Antigone to express an equal challenge to the heterosexual normativity of our own society.

Conclusion

The truth of the dialectic is that Ethical Substance cannot survive the internal collisions to which it necessarily gives rise. It gives rise to these fatal collisions because its laws are taken as immediacies rather than as dialectically interconnected and in need of thoughtful mediation.

If Hegel was looking for an ironic figure in whom the body politic of Ethical Substance is destroyed, he should have used Coriolanus, not Antigone. For as Butler's account shows, Antigone sublates the entire dialectic of Ethical Substance: in body and spirit, in herself as offspring and sister to Oedipus, and in language, she *performs* a tear in the fabric of ethical substance, rather than being torn apart by it. If we bury her properly, she will be remembered as an example of the kinds of Kinship complexities that must challenge our own fabricated State norms. The tragedy of Coriolanus, on the other hand, shows us what is at stake if we do not seek to become conscious of the complexities of our sociosexual desires; it shows us that to move beyond the tragedies of Ethical Substance we must respect these performative complexities.

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Chapter 3

Aufhebung and Anti-*Aufhebung*

Geist and Ghosts in *Hamlet*¹

Introduction

In Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (in German *Die Phänomenologie des Geistes*), consciousness progresses dialectically by means of *Aufhebung* (sublation). Hegel writes that the process is one of Spirit becoming "an other to itself, i.e., becoming an object to itself, and suspending [*aufzuheben*] this otherness."² He calls this movement "experience."

[E]xperience is the name we give to just this movement, in which the immediate, the unexperienced, i.e. the abstract, whether it be of sensuous [but still unsensed] being, or only thought of as simple, becomes alienated from itself and then returns to itself from this alienation, and is only then revealed for the first time in this actuality and truth, just as it then has become a property of consciousness also.³

In sublation, consciousness does not merely go to-and-fro between contradictory positions. It rises to a new level that comprehends those opposites. This gives rise to an upward spiral of ever more comprehensive shapes of experience. Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* is a developmental, historical, and content-rich rise up the spiral of experience. The highest epistemological standpoint of the book, "Absolute Knowing," comprehends all the previous shapes of consciousness. From that final standpoint, each different—now recollected—shape of consciousness has its own dialectical logic or, we might in some cases say, "dramatic plot."

Hegel's *psychological* account (in his *Philosophy of Mind*⁴) of how we get from sense to reason provides a shorter account of what in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is the complex and rich story of consciousness' upward spiraling (its *Aufhebung*) through levels of experience. In that psychology, Hegel refers to the highest form of thought as "inferential cognition."

This chapter concerns the upward spiral of *Aufhebung* in Shakespeare's drama *Hamlet*. I look at how Hamlet's thinking develops in complexity as he works his way toward knowledge upon which he can act. To put this in Hegelian language, I am interested in how, in this drama, sublation works toward inferential cognition. I draw on Hegel's psychology lectures and his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. To shed light on the nature of the upward spiral, I also investigate what anti-*Aufhebung*, or a downward spiral of cognition, is in this play.

In Part I of this chapter, I discuss Hegel's distinction in his psychology lectures between three different levels of thought: Understanding, Judgment, and Inferential Cognition. This involves the way in which thought takes up and changes representation ("picture-thinking").

With these distinctions in mind, in Part II I examine the way in which Hamlet rises through levels of thinking about his experience. In the play, there is a continual sense that cognition is not quite up to the task of sorting out the true from the false. The time is out of joint and it is Hamlet's responsibility to put things straight. There is uncertainty as to what truly happened to his father. I look at Hamlet's development in thinking about this problem in two ways. First, I compare Hamlet to Hegel's Unhappy Consciousness. This shows, from a phenomenological standpoint, the kind of thinking in which Hamlet is caught and the kinds of advances he tries to make in order to get out of that condition. Then, I discuss scenes from *Hamlet* to show what kind of thinking the unfolding events afford Hamlet. The "play within the play" ("The Mouse Trap") provides him some measure for assessing the truth about Claudius' guilt. It gives rise to judgment, not inferential cognition. The final scene of *Hamlet* is the one in which Hamlet is finally able to reason inferentially about what has been happening, and to act on the certitude afforded by that highest kind of thinking. In the end, Hamlet successfully uses inferential reasoning and thereby achieves some resolution to his unhappy condition. But his inferential reasoning is not the same thing as the final moment of Absolute Knowing in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. This is in part due to the fact that Hamlet never completely stops being an Unhappy Consciousness. It has in part to do with Hamlet's request of Horatio that Horatio tell Hamlet's story. These have implications for Hegel's claim that Absolute Knowing comprehends its earlier moments of *Aufhebung* in a way that is more than just mirroring plays within plays.

To shed further light on these *Aufhebungen* (these upward developments in cognition), I look at what makes us *descend* the phenomenological spiral. In other words, I look at what I call *anti-Aufhebung*. If rising up the spiral is the experience of *Geist* (Spirit), descending the spiral is the experience of ghosts. To

illustrate *anti-Aufhebung*, I examine the role of the ghost and Ophelia's madness in *Hamlet*. I conclude that the role of negation in our comprehension of that shadowy realm (those "past moments" of experience) determines whether we are ghost or *Geist*.⁵

In the final part of the chapter, these considerations are turned toward Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. I look at the final form of cognition in that work (Absolute Knowing) and ask the following questions. What, for this highest standpoint of knowledge, is the status of earlier dialectical moments? What are the "plays" within the larger "play" of Absolute Knowing? I proceed to offer a preliminary answer. Later chapters complete the picture.

Part I

Let me begin with a summary of Hegel's psychological theory about how we get from sense immediacy to inferential thinking. This involves the transition from Intuition to Representation to Reason.

General Overview

Hegel writes that "Intelligence has first, an immediate object; secondly, an inwardized material reflected into itself; thirdly, an object that is no less subjective than objective."⁶ These are respectively, intuition, representation, and thought. Each of these is in turn divided into three moments. Intuition is made of Sensation, Attention, and Intuition Proper. Representation is comprised of Recollection, Imagination, and Memory. And Thought, the last moment, is divided into Understanding, Judgment, and Reason.⁷

Our concern is with the nature of thought, particularly its final development as inferential cognition. Therefore, with regard to these twelve moments in the transition from intuition to reason, I here present only key points. Then I discuss thought in more detail.

Intuition concerns the existence of an object external to me, but also the inwardization of that object in my mind. In intuition, I come into epistemological possession of the object. Representation is the next level of cognition. It involves a more thorough synthesis of the internalized intuition. By synthesizing the intuition under a universal, representation produces an image. Representation then externalizes its images. It does so at first idiosyncratically, creating mere symbols. Gradually, this is replaced by a socially determined system of signs: Others can now understand the meaning of the images that I have chosen to represent my meaning.⁸

Hegel explains the overarching development from intuition to signs as a work of "intelligence in representations." The task is complex. Intelligence has "to render the immediacy inward, to invest itself with intuitive action in itself, and

at the same time to get rid of the subjectivity of the inwardness, and inwardly divest itself of it; so as to be in itself in an externality of its own."⁹ This is the process I have just described. There is inwardization of intuitions, the coupling of these with signs (images or words) belonging to a public language system, and then the externalization of these signs through expression (in the medium of art or words or signing of some publically recognizable sort). But there is a difference between representation and thought.

In representation we are concerned with intelligent articulation through signs, but we are not yet at the point of articulating the unity of thought and being in a comprehensive and complete way. Only thought can do that. According to Hegel, thought differs from representation in that thought comprehends its object in terms of categories. Unlike representations (in which something idiosyncratic still remains) categories are universal.

Nonetheless, there are different levels of achievement in thinking according to categories. Only the final level is a comprehensive grasp of being. Generally speaking, we can understand thought's categories in the following way.

According to Hegel, thought develops its object equally out of *thought* and out of *being*.¹⁰ Hegel's expression for this is that the known object has "concrete universality." Concrete universality means that what is thought to be is also objectively true.

This is not a correspondence theory of truth. Concrete universality is a process over time in which the knower participates in the being of the thing. The knower "tarries with" the object, is submerged into it, "loses itself in it."¹¹ Thought and being become the same thing.

According to Hegel, thought's most complete activity is that of inferential cognition. What is particularly important to note about inferential thinking is that it is both the grasping of the object in its concrete actuality, and the transition from theoretical thought to practical thought. According to Hegel, intelligence that has "completed taking possession, [is also] in its own property. . . . [T]hus thought, as free notion, is now also free in point of content. . . . [W]hen intelligence is aware that it is determinative of the content, which is its mode no less than it is a mode of being, it is Will";¹² "thought determines itself into will and remains the substance of the latter."¹³

These citations are difficult and to make sense of them we need to look more closely at the development of the moments of thought. But before I do this, let us pause at this juncture between representation and thought for a brief discussion that has implications later in the chapter.

There is a possibility that the origin of inferential thinking begins, not in thought, but within representation, in the activity of what Hegel calls imagination. The argument for this is the following. According to Hegel, "Imagination fashions for itself a content peculiar to it by thinking the object, by bringing out

what is universal in it, and giving it determinations which belong to the ego. In this way imagination ceases to be a merely formal recollection (inwardization) and becomes a recollection which affects the content, generalizes it, thus creating general representations or ideas."¹⁴ In imagination, the mind is already placing instances under universals and objectifying these in signs. This provides at least the most basic form of a conditional (if-then) structure.

If this is true, then the question is: How does inferential cognition yield a more comprehensive or penetrating truth than representation does? Why are we not always inside a "play?" How does thought develop a complete unity of thought and being, especially when its development traverses the path of representation to get there? These are questions that haunt the distinction between *Geist* and ghosts. We will return to them later in the chapter.

A Closer Look at Thinking (*Das Denken*)

The difference for Hegel between representation and thought is the following. In representation, the unity of the object retains a subjective character. In *thought*, "this unity receives the form of a unity that is both subjective and objective, since it knows itself to be the nature of the thing;"¹⁵ "[p]ure thinking knows that it alone, and not feeling or representation, is capable of grasping the truth of things."¹⁶ Representation is an assumption, whereas thought is what truly is.

But the *concrete* nature of thought (as opposed to the merging immediacy of representational assuming) can be missed if we take pure thought in abstraction. Like Kant in "What is Orientation in Thinking?"¹⁷ Hegel asserts that properly orienting the mind has to do with *freedom* of thought. But Hegel qualifies that "thinking must not stop at abstract, formal thinking, for this breaks up the content of truth." On the contrary, thought "must always develop into concrete thinking, to a cognition that comprehends its object."¹⁸ We naturally ask, what is the nature of this "concrete" thought?

The development of concrete thinking is accomplished through the three moments of thought. The first moment is the Understanding. It produces the abstract unity just mentioned. In the Understanding, "[t]he thoughts are not yet fully and freely determinate."¹⁹ Understanding is a "formal identity, working up the representations that have been memorized, into species, genera, laws, forces, etc., in short into categories." Understanding is a higher form of cognition than representation because it is not fused with its content. But its problem is that it is too abstract. Understanding yields a "quite abstract, indeterminate unity, only a certain unity [of subjectivity and objectivity]." Understanding has yet to be "filled and authenticated."²⁰

The next moment of thought in the development of concreteness is Judgment. Judgment is the process of returning to things at hand and determining

them according to the abstract categories. Judgment thereby gives concrete content to the stored up categories of the understanding. Judgment does so by “distinguish[ing] on the lines supplied by the interconnections peculiar to the concept” and “explain[ing] the individual to be a universal (species, genus).” Judgment considers the relations of the things that make up the object and thus sees the object “as an objective togetherness, as a totality.”²¹ In short, judgment matches up categories of thought with actual experiences.

But judgment is still an incomplete comprehension. It does not provide comprehension in which the object is just as much substance as subject. This is because “the object is still grasped as something given, as dependent on something else by which it is conditioned.” Despite its achievements of having articulated something according to concepts of the understanding and of thereby embodying the understanding in something singular, judgement falls short of bringing mind and being completely together.

Judgment falls short in the following way. It has compartmentalized and synthesized, but it has not taken into account within that process the *activity* of compartmentalizing and synthesizing. It seems to judgment that the singular is organized already, by itself or through some force other than thought, and that judgment *then* comes along and matches it up with thought’s categories by articulating the object according to those categories. Judgement does not realize that its own dialectical creativity of trying to unify subject and object is the energy by which the singular takes shape in the first place, as well as that energy by which the universal takes shape in the first place. Something appears to be governing the arising of being into its given shapes. Judgment appears to arrive upon a *given* scene and only then match the scene to categories of thought. That is why Hegel talks of the “raw material” that “does not get the truth of its being saved in these thought-forms.”²²

This gives rise to the perception that the matching itself is organized according to something independent of judgment. For judgment appears to be merely finding the links between singular and universal. Judgement does not realize that it is *making* the links and that in doing so, it is making the *object*. According to Hegel, this means that the dialectic—the Notion—“does not as yet reveal itself in its own shape, but in the form of an irrational necessity.”²³

Judgment does not realize that the irrational necessity is just the un-thought through aspect of categorical abstraction. The process of articulating the unity of categories and objects needs to be subtle enough that the very process of generating categories is realized to be the same process by which objects come to be. That process corrects its earlier mistake of one-sidedly generating categories and then using those as if they were prefab tools for grasping the nature of things. The correction is the realization that the generation comes from the dialectic of subject and object in a reasoning so subtle that neither object nor subject can be articulated as the truthful standpoint on its own.

But judgment does not make this correction. It puts off taking responsibility for the necessity of its judgments. Instead, it believes that Fate, or some other unknown and therefore nonrational generator is behind the facts. Even if in judging we reorganize facts rationally, the origin of the facts appears to be “beyond” us. This view of how things arise makes it impossible for judgment to become will. It can only state how things appear. For action to emerge as a principle inseparable from theory, a higher level of cognition is needed.

The third and final level of thought is inferential cognition. In this form of cognition, necessity is no longer something foreign to thought. Hegel writes cryptically: “thought supersedes the formal distinction and institutes at the same time an identity of the differences—thus being nominal reason or inferential understanding. . . .”²⁴ This needs explanation.

This is one of the better junctures in Hegel for witnessing how, in his philosophy, theory and practice are inseparable. Hegel’s expression “the formal distinction” means the distinction we have just been discussing. It is the distinction that judgment makes between what it does with the facts (i.e., unify them with the universal categories that the understanding has generated) and the origin of the facts (the irrational necessity). Things and events appear to judgment to be given, already organized entities, which judgment then organizes. But the truth of cognition is thereby always compromised because something beyond thought seems to produce that givenness, when in reality the givenness is the unity of thought and being that is actively giving rise to categories in the first place. The categories cease to be abstract not just through embodying them in singulars, but through realizing that the origin of the categories is a dialectic between subject and object. So Hegel writes that to achieve real thought (inferential cognition) we need to abandon the “formal distinction.”

The distinction is overcome when we realize “an identity of the differences.” This means that what appears to be irrational necessity (what appears to be difference from reason) is something we cannot but think. We can remain at the level of judgment by maintaining the distinction. But an honest look at the distinction reveals it is thought itself that is maintaining the distinction. The difference is an identity that thought is maintaining. It is not that the difference is not there, it is just that it is not sustained by anything other than the activity of thought in conjunction with being. Difference is the identity of thought and being. Thought as being is the production of differences and the combining of differences into unities.

To say that the origin of a fact is something other than thought, and that in principle that origin remains unthinkable is dishonest. For thought *is* thinking that “unthinkable.”²⁵ Thought is generating and maintaining the distinction. Once one realizes this, then the identity of the distinction becomes something for which one takes responsibility. One takes responsibility, not unilaterally as a pure subject, but dialectically, as someone aware of the coming-to-be of being.

Holding to the otherness of the difference as though it were really other than thought is in fact making the mistake of taking that other as an abstract immediacy rather than as mediated by the dialectical nature of thought. It is failing to realize the *process* of difference-formation by which otherness arises. So in fact, radical otherness is an abstract immediacy that needs to be mediated.

We begin to see here why, for Hegel, theory at its most profound is the same thing as willing. This is not to say that all of being is collapsed into the freedom of some individual subjective will. It is rather that will is the practical side of the creative activity of knowing being. The other side is the appearance side—the theoretical—the theatre of knowing viewed as though we were passive audiences. The truth is that the audience position is an active willing one, the will being the event quality—the actuality—of the play. For a play is not actual if there is no drama or no audience. Both are necessary.

Mediation does not gather otherness into the immediacy of an assumption; mediation is the process of thought knowingly comprehending the identity of difference. The truth of identity and difference is that it is just as much subject as substance. It is not hubris to think being this way because we are just as much *being thought* in this way. Thinking is also being thought. This is not to say that there is a consciousness beyond our thinking that is thinking us, but rather that all thought is inseparable from all being.

Hegel writes that in this “inference (syllogism)[, thought] characterizes a content from itself, by superseding that form-difference. With the perception of the necessity, the last immediacy still attaching to formal thought has vanished.”²⁶ The necessity of a fact, which judgment took to be alien to judgment, is the necessity of the Notion. It is the movement of the dialectic of thought and being. In grasping necessity as the becoming of thought and being, the mind “grasps the Notion” rather than just judging what is the truth.

“Only in the third stage of pure thinking is the Notion as such known. Therefore, this stage represents comprehension in the strict sense of the word.”²⁷ The highest form of thought (following Understanding and Judgment) is inferential cognition. Only inferential cognition is knowledge of the Notion.

As I mentioned earlier, Hegel concludes this section on thinking (and thus on theoretical mind as a whole) by claiming that intelligence at this stage is the will: “thought determines itself into will and remains the substance of the latter.”²⁸ There is nothing normative about this transition. It is a function of the fundamental unity of thought and being in which “the universal is known as self-particularizing, and from the particularization gathering itself together into individuality; or what is the same thing, the particular loses its self-subsistence to become a moment of the Notion.”²⁹

This completes our summary of Hegel’s psychological account of thought in the *Philosophy of Mind*.

Two Remarks Need to Be Made About Hegel's Theory

First, we can return for a moment to our earlier query about the sublation of representation by thought. I have argued elsewhere that, despite thought's overcoming picture-thinking, it is nonetheless the imagination that is key to that overcoming. We can here add that the beginning of inferential cognition lies in the imagination, and that the force by which we eventually come to grasp the Notion is first exhibited in the work of the imagination. Hegel's argument is however, that the imagination by itself risks putting knowledge into the shape of theory alone (of an assumption, a representation). It risks making us into an audience that does not know it is a participant in the play. We must come to know the force of the imagination as the creative activity of being that is not thinkable outside of the dialectic of subject and object. Actively *knowing* the creative side of imagination (rather than merely grasping truth imaginatively as theory), requires a level of insight that exceeds the level of imagination, even though thought cannot achieve the completion of thought without the imagination.³⁰ This tension between imaginative representation and thought is something that I explore below in *Hamlet*.

Second, Hegel does not mention this, but it is clear that inferential cognition is a kind of practical syllogism.³¹ Inferential cognition as practical syllogism is not only the process of deliberation toward a particular goal and the conclusion in action. Rather, this practical syllogism is (also) the vehicle of knowledge and being. But I think that we need to draw a distinction here between inferential cognition *tout court* and inferential cognition in a comprehensive form.

Inferential cognition *tout court* is not the final shape of knowing that Hegel calls Absolute Knowing. For the Notion has to be grasped in a phenomenologically comprehensive way.³² In other words, it is not enough to grasp the Notion: One must also have traversed all the phenomenological forms that the Notion has been in experience. The story of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is that of the Notion's education over history to the point where inferential reason is Absolute Knowing.

The complete comprehensive knowledge of absolute knowing requires phenomenological deliberation. Phenomenological deliberation eventually yields speculative knowledge. It does so because the necessity within phenomena is the necessity of being. Being has willed itself into complete self-knowledge.

But the completion of thought also requires knowledge of the inseparability of theory and practice. Inferential cognition gives rise to will. But that will needs to become spirit. Otherwise the will can be caught in a theory that is not fully thought through. Fully thinking through the will as spirit is fully thinking through the shapes of social justice.

Hegel does not address justice in his chapter on Absolute Knowing (he develops it separately in other works). But we must incorporate it into our

discussion of Absolute Knowing in order to make sense of what happens to the will. According to Hegel, the “absolute” knower knows the necessity involved in its experience to be nothing other than the history of the dialectical development of thought and being. Thinking at its absolute level is no longer locked in representations about its experience (or, as he says in the *Phenomenology*, no longer caught up in “picture-thinking”).³³ In other words, it no longer makes assumptions. The form of justice that arises from making assumptions is, as we see below, not really justice at all. Nor is Absolute Knowing the kind of thought that stands back with a blueprint of categories into which it then judges things to fit. The legal structure that would belong to that understanding and judging of things of absolute knowledge would be an abstract code that gets imposed on people. It would not grasp experience as a concrete universal. Instead, absolute thinking is the subtle process of self-conscious interpretation of being in which one’s assumptions and judgments are questioned until they yield the shape of their creation within the context of a comprehensive history of experience. For Absolute Knowing, therefore, knowledge and being and social justice are one.

Transition to Part II

Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* puts into dramatic shape the development of cognition from representational cognition to inferential thinking. The play also shows why inferential thinking *tout court* is not Absolute Knowing. Furthermore, *Hamlet* puts the issues we have been discussing into marvellous dramatic tension: The scenes continuously create tension between imagination and thought, between representation and inferential certainty, and between theory and will. Therefore, let us turn to a consideration of it.

Part II

I begin by comparing the character of Hamlet with what Hegel calls the “Unhappy Consciousness” in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. This gives us a phenomenological content to work with and sets the scene for discussing the spirals of experience that occur in the play. In the play, there is both an upward spiraling (Hamlet’s coming to some certainty about Claudius’s guilt) and a downward spiraling (Ophelia’s madness and the fact that the play ends tragically). Each has to do with the realm of shadows and how they are sensed, imagined, and thought. I look first at the upward spiral and then discuss the downward one.

Hamlet and Hegel’s Unhappy Consciousness

The following comparison of Hamlet with the Hegel’s Unhappy Consciousness departs from Hegel’s own reading of Hamlet. Hegel does not mention Hamlet

in his description of the Unhappy Consciousness in the *Phenomenology*, nor does Hegel's discussion of Hamlet in the *Aesthetics* involve any mention of this condition. Indeed, in the *Aesthetics*, Hegel thinks that Hamlet is a "beautiful soul."³⁴ His comparison is made in the section on "Character as Inner but Undeveloped Totality." Hegel writes:

If it comes to a collision, it [the character] therefore knows of no help, it rushes rashly and thoughtlessly into activity or is passively involved in complications. So, e.g., Hamlet is a beautiful and noble heart; not inwardly weak at all, but, without a powerful feeling for life, in the feebleness of his melancholy he strays distressed into error; he has a keen sense of how the weather lies; no external sign, no ground for suspicion is there, but he feels uncanny, everything is not as it ought to be; he surmises the dreadful deed that has been done. His father's ghost gives him more details. Inwardly he is quickly ready for revenge; he steadily thinks of the duty prescribed to him by his own heart; but he is not carried away, like Macbeth; he does not kill, rage, or strike with the directness of Laertes; on the contrary, he persists in the inactivity of a beautiful inner soul which cannot make itself actual or engage in the relationships of his present world. He waits, looks in the beautiful uprightness of his heart for objective certainty, but, even after he has found it, he comes to no firm decision but lets himself be led by external circumstances. In this unreality he now makes a mistake, even in what confronts him, and kills old Polonius instead of the King; he acts too hastily when he should have investigated prudently, while when the right energy was needed he remains sunk into himself—until, without his action, in this developed course of circumstance and chances, the fate of the whole realm and of himself has steadily been developed in his own withdrawn inner life.³⁵

Hegel makes "the fate of the whole realm and of [Hamlet] himself" an active player in this drama. This appeal to fate is significant. It suggests that, despite Hamlet's success in developing certainty, Hamlet's thinking does not translate into will, as Hegel's psychological account of inference claims it should if it is inferential cognition.

I disagree with Hegel's reading. I argue below that Hamlet is not a beautiful soul but an Unhappy Consciousness; that he *does* achieve inferential cognition and act; that his sense of "fate" is due to the fact that his practical syllogism develops within an undeveloped form of justice, namely, the call for murderous revenge. This undeveloped form of justice (belonging to his society) does not enable Hamlet to think death and negation comprehensively. Hamlet achieves inferential cognition *tout court*, but not Absolute Knowing.

The main characteristics and story line of the Unhappy Consciousness in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* are as follows.

The Unhappy Consciousness is the unity in one mind of two consciousnesses: that of the Stoic and that of the Sceptic. "[T]he Unhappy consciousness is the consciousness of self as a dual-natured, merely contradictory being."³⁶

The dialectical unrest experienced by the Unhappy Consciousness is, on the one hand, the desire to be united with what Hegel calls the "Unchangeable." The Unchangeable validates the stoic position of stability of thought over against a world of change. But on the other hand, the sceptical side has shown that stoic inward stability is in fact unstable. Every one of the stoic's thoughts is but a proposition. As a proposition, it holds no weight against contradictory propositions, each of which can make equal claim to the stability of stoic inwardness. Consciousness cannot identify solely with the Unchangeable, for it needs to be at peace with the fact that consciousness is changeable. Consciousness therefore seeks to purge itself of its changeableness by suppressing its changeable body, speech, and mind. So it seeks unchanging unity but is therefore embattled in change.

Relief eventually comes to the Unhappy Consciousness through a third individual. He is neither the Changeable nor the Unchangeable. This third (whom Hegel calls the Priest) mediates between the Unchangeable and the Changeable, establishing a solution to the dialectical unrest of this soul.

The resolution provided by the Priest is an initial form of resolution. The *complete* resolution of the Unhappy Consciousness comes later in the *Phenomenology*, with the larger social movement of Protestantism. According to Hegel, the final phase of Protestantism is the philosophical comprehension of things in Absolute Knowing. In it, consciousness is liberated from the idea of an Unchangeable as a substance separate from itself and realizes that unchangeability is one-sidedness, that the truth of thought and being is the dialectical becoming of subject and substance together. The Absolute is then properly taken to be the community's self-mediation through speculative self-interpretation.

With the resolution through the Priest, the Unhappy Consciousness does not completely comprehend the Notion. Rather, it reaches the standpoint that Hegel calls "Reason." (That is the name of the chapter following the chapter on the Unhappy Consciousness in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.) Consciousness has become reason because through confession, it has become freed of the problem of being both changeable and unchangeable. Consciousness does not grasp this distinction as its own dialectically necessary identity. Rather, it defers the problem by making the Priest mediate between the Unchangeable and the Changeable. So despite repeated erring, consciousness can, through confession, repeatedly return to being a child of God. It is thereby free to approach the world as a rational observer (under God's grace). It can pass

judgment on how things are, leaving the problem of the Unchanging origin of things to the theologians.

To put this in the language of Hegel's psychology, this "judging reason" is not inferential cognition. For (a) it does not know its syllogisms concretely as the unity of thought and being; (b) it has suppressed radical alterity rather than reconciled it as part of its thought and being; and (c) it is still subject to the "irrational necessity" because of that alterity.

After the chapter on Reason in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, consciousness has to come to grips with itself as a social singularity that is both judge of and judged by others. In this pressure cooker of social history (which Hegel calls "Spirit"), consciousness eventually develops an attitude to events that is no longer controlled by any conception of irrational necessity.³⁷ For example, it ceases to adhere to what it initially, unconsciously believed was its Fate. In the chapter that follows ("Religion"), consciousness performs the process again with regard to the history of shapes of divine creativity. Again, it eventually overcomes the "form-distinction," finally grasping the Notion in a completely comprehensive way. This is the moment of the transition to the philosophy of Absolute Knowing.

Hamlet is like the Unhappy Consciousness in its original contradictory experience. His behavior at the start of the play indicates that for him there are two worlds: the world of his earnest grief (which makes him stoic) and the world of the court's seeming (whose false permanence he treats with scepticism). The former makes him melancholic and the latter mocking ("Seems Madam? Nay, it *is*. I know not 'seems.'"³⁸) He is unhappy because his scepticism is turned toward himself as well. He is restless; he seeks peace in an unchangeable condition. It is only the possibility of more restless badness in an afterlife that keeps him from suicide.

Hamlet is in this condition when he sees the ghost of Hamlet senior. The ghost presents the possibility of an Unchangeable "law of the father." The ghost is an authority and in this respect the ghost validates his stoic inwardness against the pomp and ceremony of a seeming world. On the other hand, Hamlet turns his scepticism on his own mind. He wonders whether the ghost is a fantasy produced by his melancholy. Hegel praises Hamlet for this sceptical position: "[T]he apparition does not command a helpless Hamlet; Hamlet doubts, and, by arrangements of his own, will get certainty for himself, before he embarks on action."³⁹

Hamlet's first task is to find out whether the ghost comes from the world of truth or of seeming. If the ghost speaks true, Hamlet's second task is his duty to avenge his father. Hamlet experiences a mix of the following desires. He desires to divest himself of the changing world; he wants to divest the world of his changeable and ineffectual self; and he has the earnest desire to

be united to—and fulfill the law of—the Unchangeable “beyond” by avenging his father. He is a classic Unhappy Consciousness.

Now let us look at how Hamlet develops in terms of the kinds of cognition he experiences.

Hamlet's Developing Cognition

In the play, Hamlet develops from doubt and uncertainty to clarity and certainty. He moves up the dialectical spiral insofar as he figures out a way to move from intuitions (uncomfortable feelings, uncanny premonition of the time being out of joint, the ghost's appearance) through representation (the “Mouse Trap” play) to a correct inference about Claudius' guilt (the certainty of thought) and to act (killing Claudius).⁴⁰

This rising is consistent with Hegel's claims about consciousness coming into possession of the truth by means of moving beyond representation. Hamlet gradually makes the ghost's story, which arose before him at the level of intuition and imagination, into truth. The process happens gradually and presents interesting problems.

First, Hamlet tries to find a way to translate his intuition of the ghost and its fantastical story into judgment. For Hamlet, the problem of judging Claudius is solved through the use of theatre. Hamlet sets up the “Mouse Trap” play in order to capture the conscience of the king. Hamlet thereby sets his own consciousness on stable ground. But while his use of the “Mouse Trap” play gets him to the second kind of thought—judgment—it does not produce correct inferential reasoning about Claudius' prior crime. The evidence of this shortfall is the following.

According to Hegel, the move from representation to thought is the precondition for practical mind. If the “Mouse Trap” afforded Hamlet inferential knowledge, Hamlet ought to become a practical agent who can take revenge on Claudius. But Hamlet does not act after the play. He confidently judges Claudius, “thinking through” the dramatic representation and the resultant dramatic reaction of the king. He thereby achieves a higher degree of certainty than hitherto. But he does not yet use the inferential cognition that produces willful action.

The judgment that Hamlet produces as a result of the “Mouse Trap” play shows that Hamlet has experienced what in Hegel's philosophy we call “the unity of thought and being.” But because he judges rather than infers, Hamlet grasps that unity in an abstract way. He understands it to be true that Claudius is guilty. The facts match the category. So he also judges Claudius to be deserving of revenge. But he does not *will* the revenge into action. He does not will because he is still plagued by a sense of the irrational necessity of events.

Second, Hamlet's judgment that Claudius is evil is confirmed by his discovery on the boat to England that the King intended to have him murdered.

Hamlet does act at that point, switching the King's letter with one written by himself (that indicates that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are to be killed). But the act is not the one he is working toward making (i.e., revenging his father by killing Claudius). That act is the completion of his inferential certainty about the guilt of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in conspiring against him. But it is not inferential certainty about Claudius' murder of his father.

On Hamlet's return to Denmark, Hamlet sounds like he is certain of Claudius' guilt in both matters. He tells Horatio:

Does it not, think'st thee, stand me now upon—
He that hath killed my king and whored my mother,
Popped in between th'election and my hopes,
Thrown out his angle for my proper life,
And with such coz'nage—is't not perfect conscience
To quit him with this arm? And is't not to be damned
To let this canker of our nature come
In further evil?⁴¹

But notice that Hamlet's certainty is phrased as a series of questions. Despite his correct judgment, Hamlet's scepticism is still hovering. He still has some way to go before having inferential reason about Claudius' guilt regarding the death of Hamlet senior. He therefore also has some way to go before translating thought into willful act against Claudius. Other elements in the play support this reading.

First, right before the final swordfight with Laertes, Hamlet understands what is happening to him in terms of what Hegel calls "irrational necessity" (which we recall is a hallmark of judgment, not of inferential cognition). Hamlet feels a premonition: "thou wouldst not think how all here about my heart—but it is no matter." Horatio: "Nay, good my lord—" Hamlet: "It is but foolery, but it is such a kind of gain-giving as would perhaps trouble a woman."⁴² When Horatio tells him to obey his heart and not fight, Hamlet is fatalistic: "Not a whit. We defy augury. There's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come. If it be not to come, it will be now. If it be not now, yet it will come. The readiness is all. Since no man has aught of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes?"⁴³

Second, Hamlet enters the final scene with no intention of exacting revenge against Claudius at that time. Even though he senses something significant is going to happen, possibly even his own death, Hamlet enters as if it is a simple duel with Laertes.

Third, let us turn to that final scene. The scene is a staged one: The King and Laertes have set the stage to kill Hamlet. Secondly, the dramatic events that unfold make it obvious to everyone in the court that Claudius is guilty. In both these respects, the duel scene is another play within the play.

The important difference from the "Mouse Trap" is that Hamlet is an actor rather than spectator. There are two ways of viewing what happens. These two stand in tension.

On the one hand, Hamlet's own actions appear in some ways to be stage-directed and therefore not to come from himself. First, Hamlet is unknowingly fighting a staged duel to the death. Second, the passions that get whipped up as people start getting poisoned and wounded seem to sweep Hamlet up. His act of killing Claudius *appears* to be generated from the plot and its consequent storm of events. Indeed, this is how Hegel reads the scene, as we saw from the long passage by Hegel cited above. Also, the pace of events in the duel scene contributes to this: It seems that Hamlet does not have the time to think inferentially and that he acts on impulse. Irrational necessity appears to win the day.

On the other hand, the argument can be made that Hamlet does willingly act upon knowledge. When Hamlet learns from wounded Laertes that Claudius has organized the duel against him, and when he sees that the King has poisoned his mother, his inferential certainty becomes willful action and he strikes.

The tension between dramatic impulse and practical deliberation in this final scene is consistent with what has been happening throughout the play. The play as a whole has developed to the extreme the tensions between theory and practice, between representation and knowing willfulness. The final scene takes the delay in those tensions as far as possible.⁴⁴

In the end, has Hamlet reasoned and acted or has he been swallowed up in the drama? Is he a thinking and willing individual or is he a figure locked in a representational scheme?

Fourth, the final scene poses a problem for the idea that Hamlet attains inferential cognition. The final act reveals Claudius' evilness to the court. If Hamlet was waiting for some way to prove to the court that the King was evil, he did not need to wait for this final scene. He could have returned from the boat with the King's letter (the letter requesting Hamlet's death). Hamlet could have taken Claudius to task in court for that. And based on Claudius' murderous intent toward Hamlet, Hamlet could have made a case for Claudius' murderousness toward his father. At the very least, Hamlet would have forced his mother, the Queen, to publicly decide between a husband who sought her son's death, and her son. But Hamlet did not "go to court" with the letter. This is perhaps the most glaring delay in the play: He had what he needed to begin defeating Claudius publicly, but did not act. Why?

What kept Hamlet from acting out justice was his need to take revenge on Claudius for the murder of his father. Like Shylock's demand for a pound of flesh,⁴⁵ Hamlet's conception of justice against Claudius is *dramatic* revenge. The final scene provides this drama. Had Hamlet produced the King's letter in court,

there would have been a different (and to Hamlet, unsatisfying), *legal* “production.” That justice in and through words and law would have drawn the court away for the dramatic shape of justice as revenge that engrosses Hamlet.

With this in mind, we can sort out the tension between drama and inferential cognition in the final scene. Hamlet does develop inferential knowledge and does act willingly. He performs a practical syllogism. But his inference is acted out within the dramatic structure of revenge, which itself is a kind of irrational necessity. Revenge is irrational necessity because it does not recognize the right of the criminal to correction. It does not recognize the perpetrator’s *Geist*. To fail to do so is to foreshorten the judging individual’s own experience of the unity of thought and being.

So although Hamlet reaches inferential cognition *tout court*, he is not an absolute knower. For he has not developed (indeed, his society has not developed) the legal forms of social justice that recognize individual rights in and through the more dispassionate contracts (and interpretations) of written law.

In the end, revenge is the drama which has, throughout the play, caught the will of the Prince. Even though he reasons well and acts, it is done within the confines of a very limited and exaggerated notion of justice, a notion that has not developed the concept of right and legal process.⁴⁶ The moral imagination at work in revenge is limited to dramatic representation.

Despite Hamlet’s efforts to move beyond assuming that the ghost speaks truthfully and despite his successful efforts to reason beyond a doubt, his act is finally based on the *assumption* that guilt of regicide warrants death by the sword (just as he thinks that being a woman warrants going to a nunnery⁴⁷). His practical syllogism is not comprehensively just. He achieves inferential cognition but not absolute knowing.

Let us conclude. By means of the “Mouse Trap,” Hamlet forms a judgment about Claudius’ guilt. But his judgment leaves him in the grip of “irrational necessity” and so he still does not act. In the final duel scene, Hamlet develops inferential knowledge and acts: He performs a practical syllogism. But his inference is in tension with the dramatic structure of revenge which itself is a kind of irrational necessity that constrains his act within a dramatic form of justice. Although Hamlet reaches inferential cognition and wills, he is not a self-conscious member of absolute spirit.

The End of Hamlet’s Unhappy Consciousness in Relation to Inferential Cognition

We can now bring our two lines of development together. In Hegel’s account of the initial dialectical resolution of the Unhappy Consciousness, a mediating “Third” enters. The Priest’s mediation is necessary for consciousness to take up a rational standpoint toward the world. By means of confession, consciousness

dispenses with the to-and-fro of the changeable consciousness in relationship to the Unchangeable. Consciousness is reunited with the world; it becomes certain of its knowing. "Reason is the certainty of consciousness that it is all reality."⁴⁸

If there has been a "third" in the play who mediates for Hamlet, it is Horatio. Throughout the play, Horatio has been Hamlet's closest friend, the one to whom he tells his secret. As Hamlet dies, he asks Horatio to completely mediate Hamlet's life by telling Hamlet's story. His request is persistent and repeated: "Horatio, I am dead. / Thou liv'st. Report me and my cause aright / To the unsatisfied"; and moments later "If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart, / Absent thee from felicity a while, / and in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain / To tell my story." And as Fortinbras arrives in the distance, Hamlet again asks Horatio "So tell him, with th'occurents, more and less / Which have solicited. The rest is silence."⁴⁹ When Hamlet dies, Horatio agrees, saying, "let me speak to th' yet unknowing world / How these things came about. . . . All this can I / Truly deliver."⁵⁰

At Hamlet's death, Horatio is the only one in possession of the logic of the drama. He *knows* what happened and has the will to speak it. In Horatio, therefore, we have the culmination of thought in the play. The conclusion of Horatio's practical syllogism is the act of narration. Hamlet's earlier failure to take words as means for justice is now partially set right: Justice will be *spoken* rather than acted out. Dying Hamlet exits the drama of revenge and the play becomes words.

This sublation of Hamlet's life into narrative form marks a transition in the play to a less dramatic form of social self-understanding. But it does not cure Hamlet of being an Unhappy Consciousness. There are two facts that show this.

First, despite Hamlet's success in unifying thought and will, this unification is simultaneous with his destruction. In this respect, Hamlet is in fact a *successful* Unhappy Consciousness (rather than a cured one): In dying, he succeeds in divesting himself of his changeable nature, just as Hegel's Unhappy Consciousness sought to do. In acting out his will, Hamlet has negated his will. The rub of suicide's bad dream is annulled: The only dream that carries him after death is Horatio's safe narration. His memory is repetition without change.

Second, Horatio's narration is Hamlet's confession. But the confession can have no absolving power on living Hamlet. In other words, Hamlet's erring assumptions are made consistent with a rational order of historical narration, but Hamlet is dead and therefore does not live that rational order. Horatio comprehends Hamlet's life. But what is comprehended and mediated is no longer a living, changeable person. Hamlet, like his history, is now unchangeable.

Horatio's Hamlet

One final note about Horatio's narration of Hamlet's experience: It represents a higher form of social self-understanding than Hamlet's dramatic experience, for it transforms Hamlet's dramatic experience into narrative. But this presentation of history in words establishes only the potential for rational contracts, not the full development of a rational social order that has overcome its desire to "play out" the dramas of revenge and murder. So as it stands at the end of the play, despite its being historical comprehension, Horatio's narrative can be nothing other than the tale of the drama of revenge we have just witnessed. Without philosophical comprehension of this tragedy, Hamlet as narrated story becomes the *ghost* of an Unhappy Consciousness. That tragic irrational necessity haunts unless someone interprets Horatio's story and provides philosophical comprehension of Hamlet's experience.

In other words, the form of Horatio's *Hamlet* is problematic. Horatio's only task is to speak Hamlet's story. He is not asked to interpret it. Our task has been to rationally comprehend the story of Hamlet as part of *Geist's* rise up the spiral of experience. Without this effort, the tragedy of *Hamlet* remains merely its retelling. Horatio's *Hamlet* becomes a series of mirrors inside mirrors, each reflecting the same tale. That leaves us with knowledge of the play that is always only a representation of completion rather than comprehension. We would not grasp its Notion. In other words, we would fail to see the *Geist* of *Hamlet* and therefore *The Tragedy of Hamlet* becomes a ghostly drama; one that never gets out of its internal contradictions.

We have come to a partial comprehension of this play. Let us try further by looking at what draws cognition downward and at the antidote to downward spirals.

*Anti-Aufhebung**Ghosts and the Problem of Hamlet*⁵¹

Ghosts are past inwardizations—intuitions, representations, memories—that have taken on an apparent life of their own. They are not subject to negation. That is, they are not subject to the power of mind to generate or destroy them at will (unlike, for example, recollections that are under the mind's control). Ghosts are memories that defy the will of the living. On the one hand, Horatio's memory of Hamlet is within Horatio's control. But on the other, insofar as the tragedy of it is not interpreted and understood, that memory is a haunting tragedy.

Ghosts defy being sublated (*aufgehoben*). But they are not free in their defiance. They are false permanencies. Their lack of ability to be negated prevents them from being things that develop into something new. Ontologically, they resist development. They seem unable to be taken up or suppressed. They are pure theory, unable to act in the world. Yet they appear as immediacies, as urgent matters.

Ghosts wander among their contradictions. On the one hand, what they are missing is the resolution of their final curtain. On the other hand, what they are missing is justice. The former cannot come without the latter. Both the final curtain and justice are arrived at by means of negation.

At the end of the play, it is clear that Hamlet feels that his conception of justice has been met. Claudius is dead, his father avenged, and Hamlet's behavior vindicated. Hamlet dies at peace and in this respect is not a ghost in Horatio's narration. But the spirit of Absolute Knowing requires a higher order of justice if it is not to be haunted by its past. Its determinate negation must resolve all contradictions possible within experience. From the standpoint of Absolute Knowing, Horatio's tale haunts us. For the story he tells is of a macabre, murderous, and violent revenge in which many innocent people die.

By showing how Hamlet's inferential cognition within the framework of revenge is a limited form of justice in comparison with the *Geist* of Absolute Knowing, we can lower the final curtain on the ghost *Hamlet*. Just as Hamlet had to sort out truth from illusion in the ghost's tale of regicide, we must sort truth from illusion in *The Tragedy of Hamlet*. In order to do this, we need to understand more clearly what the final curtain is, what ghosts are, and how determinate negation operates.

The Final Curtain

In theater, what lies behind the curtain is the play. When the curtain has not yet opened, we do not know what is behind it. It hides the drama that will unfold. The final curtain marks the end of the drama.

The ghost of Hamlet *senior* appeared as a kind of curtain between this world and the beyond. He did not exist properly in either world. He was stuck in-between. He was a veil behind which Hamlet junior could not peer.⁵² Furthermore, the ghost unveiled a drama of fratricide.

Hamlet's skepticism with regard to the ghost and its tale initiates Hamlet's upward spiral of knowledge, a spiral which we have seen leads to increasingly complex forms of cognition and knowledge. To solve the problem of whether the ghost's story was true, Hamlet creates a drama. That "Mouse Trap" play reveals that, behind what had hitherto been the "curtain" of Claudius' complacent face, the truth of the ghost's drama was alive in Claudius' memory. The play is designed by Hamlet precisely to raise that "curtain." Hamlet: "O good Horatio, I'll take

the Ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive?" Horatio: "Very well, my lord." Hamlet: "Upon the talk of the pois'ning?" Horatio: "I did very well note him."⁵³ By the end of the play, Hamlet has revenged his father, satisfying Hamlet Senior's need for justice. The ghost is put to rest. Young Hamlet has let the final curtain for Hamlet senior.

Downward Spirals

But Hamlet also makes mistakes with regard to curtains. In Act 3 Scene 4, Hamlet kills Polonius, who is behind the curtain in the Queen's bedroom. He thinks it is the King behind the curtain. In doing so, he assumes something false and acts erroneously. This generates a tragic scene which in turn leads to other tragedies. It leads to the madness and death of Ophelia (Polonius's daughter) and to Hamlet's fatal, poisoned-rapier duel with Laertes (Polonius' son). Hamlet's brash act has a downward spiral effect that pulls against Hamlet's upward spiral toward certainty and effective revenge.

Hamlet's problem in the Polonius scene is, on the one hand, the curtain. It hides Polonius and thus blocks Hamlet's knowledge. On the other hand, Hamlet's problem is that he punctures the curtain. This is an act of blindness that sets off a series of dramatic acts of blindness and unreason. Ignorant assumptions and brashness together generate bad practical syllogisms.

Hamlet makes another mistake of this kind earlier in the play. In Act 3 Scene 1, Hamlet projects all manner of abuse on Ophelia, leaving no room for skepticism about her true intentions. He is sure that her love and her womanhood are corrupt. "If thou doth marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery, go, farewell. Or if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go, and quickly, too. Farewell."⁵⁴ Hamlet's behavior, alongside his later killing of her father, creates the downward spiral of her madness.

A downward spiral is therefore due to failing to question what is behind the curtain and acting on mistaken assumptions. It is stabbing or attacking the curtain onto which or behind which one is projecting an enemy, rather than lifting it to find out what lies behind. A downward spiral is the result of a bad structure of moral imagination.⁵⁵

We can call this double process (of assuming incorrectly and acting on that assumption) anti-*Aufhebung*. For instead of sublating contradictions, it generates contradictions. Anti-*Aufhebung* pulls cognition down to lower levels.

Ophelia is destroyed by anti-*Aufhebung*. Her thoughts become caught in impossible contradictions: She is unable to reconcile her love for Hamlet with his bad treatment of her, or to reconcile her love for her father with his murder(er). Horatio explains her state to the Queen:

She speaks much of her father . . . speaks things in doubt / that carry but half sense. Her speech is nothing, / yet the unshaped use of it doth move / The hearers to collection. They aim at it, / And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts, / Which, as her winks and nods and gestures yield them, / Indeed would make one think there might be thought, / Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.⁵⁶

These conflicting memories do not die in her mind. Her memories generate a veil, a curtain which shrouds her reality in illusion. Instead of *Geist*, she is a walking ghost.⁵⁷ Her madness leads to suicide: She draws the final curtain and lays her ghostly existence(s) to rest.

Anti-Aufhebung and Aufhebung

Anti-Aufhebung ought to be a part of *Aufhebung*. For, in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, it is the contradictions that force sublation. For example, in Sense Certainty, consciousness moves back and forth between the singularity of its sense experiences (being an “I” here and now) and the universality (indefinite multiplicity) of the language it uses to express this singular experience (“I” means many “I’s,” “here” many heres and “now” means many nows). The language that consciousness uses to make its singular claims operates with universals that do not specify the singular. Consciousness therefore moves from this sensuously certain “to-and-fro” to the more adequate perception of things as substances with qualities. That in turn leads to contradictions which consciousness seeks to mediate by rising to the understanding, and so on up the ladder of experience until *Geist* has comprehended all the phenomenological moments possible in experience. This comprehensive knowing is Absolute Knowing.

But a ghost is the consciousness of contradictions that will not go away. The to-and-fro movement is a wandering; the memories do not get negated. A ghost is a form of cognition that cannot resolve itself into a higher level. Indeed it often sinks.

Hamlet as Geist and as Ghost

We have shown above how, throughout the play, Hamlet is a *Geist* trying to rise up the spiral of cognition. He makes mistakes but he does not go mad like Ophelia or haunt the castle like his father.

Nonetheless, we have also seen that, captive within Horatio’s narrative, Hamlet is the ghost of an Unhappy Consciousness. We showed that this was a function of Hamlet’s commitment to revenge (as opposed to a justice independent of such drama). That irrational necessity within the play, coupled with the fact

that the narration is a repetition rather than interpretation—a representation that never escapes being a representation—haunts us at the end of the play.

The key to lowering the final curtain on *Hamlet* lies in Hamlet's experience of the final curtain in the graveyard scene.⁵⁸ There, Hamlet finds determinate negation in an indisputable form. This negation shakes him from the realm of shadows in which he and the court have been. While it does not make him exit his dream of revenge, it shows the working of determinate negation in thought. We can use this to clarify Hamlet's shortfall and therefore lay the cause of his tragedy to rest. For a close look at this form of negation shows how the failure to think it properly results in ghostly consciousnesses. In other words, the key to thinking the play philosophically lies in understanding the role of negation in thought.

Before we do this, we need to take a moment to show how, prior to this scene, shadows dominate the play.

From the start, the play has been shrouded in shadows. It is a world of "seeming." Hamlet has been "shadowed" by the King and Polonius and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Hamlet's melancholy has made him a shadow of himself. After the graveyard scene, Hamlet accuses his earlier "shadow of himself" for his bad actions: "Who does it, then? His madness: If't be so, Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd; his madness is poor Hamlet's enemy."⁵⁹

Also, in the court's shadowy world, Hamlet could not speak in earnest. He obfuscated. He did this, paradoxically, because he viewed himself as the only one who both saw the curtains and sought to lift them. He chastised those who pretended to "know him" as they projected interpretations on him. See for example Hamlet's rebuke of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern for thinking that they could play him like a pipe:

Hamlet: "Will you play upon this pipe?"

Guildenstern: "My lord, I cannot."

Hamlet: "'Tis as easy as lying. Govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will disclose most excellent music. Look you, these are the stops."

Guildenstern: "But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony. I have not the skill."

Hamlet: "Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would play upon me, you would seem to know my stops,

you would pluck out the heart of my mystery, you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass; and there is much music, excellent voice in this little organ, yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me."⁶⁰

See also Hamlet's reply to Polonius when asked if he knew Polonius:

Polonius: "Do you know me, my lord?"

Hamlet: "Excellent, excellent well. You're a fishmonger."

Polonius: "Not I, my lord."

Hamlet: "Then I would you were so honest a man."

Polonius: "Honest, my lord?"

Hamlet: "Ay, sir. To be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand."⁶¹

Thus, prior to the graveyard scene, anti-*Aufhebungs* spiral off in all directions. People project their assumptions about what is really there, hiding behind curtains in order to confirm their view point, watching the pre-interpreted drama unfold without themselves being seen.

Now, let us look at how negation cuts through this shadowy realm.

The Graveyard Scene

Yorick's skull and Ophelia's body present Hamlet with death as purely negative. They signify the final curtain on those lives. They do not haunt Hamlet. In fact, these particular instances of the final curtain are understood by Hamlet in a universal way. They allow him to cut through the veils of hypocrisy and break out of the shadows. Let us see how this occurs.

THE NEGATIVITY OF THE SKULL-BONE

In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel writes that a

variety of ideas may well occur to us in connection with a skull, like those of Hamlet over Yorick's skull; but the skull-bone just by itself is such an indifferent, natural thing that nothing else is to be directly seen in it, or fancied about it, than simply the bone itself.⁶²

In Hamlet's encounter with the skull-bone (and soon thereafter with the dead body of Ophelia), *Aufhebung* occurs. Let us recall Hegel's account of *Aufhebung*: "the abstract becomes alienated from itself and then returns to itself from this alienation, and is only then revealed for the first time in this actuality and truth, just as it then has become a property of consciousness also."⁶³ We can interpret Hamlet's *Aufhebung* upon seeing the bones in two ways.

On the one hand, the "abstract" which becomes alienated in this scene is the abstract concept of life as a realm of mere "seeming." The sheer deadness of the bones provides Hamlet with the first instance of something absolutely definitive in experience. Hamlet is alienated from his alienated idea that life is nothing but shadows. Yorick's skull and Ophelia's death make all of the court's "shadows" inessential. For a time, Hamlet is freed from the haunting feeling that irrational necessities orchestrate experience. By understanding death, Hamlet comes into possession of his life.

Furthermore, in Hamlet's speech about Yorick, Hamlet sees that his *memories* of Yorick are insubstantial compared with Yorick's skull.

Alas, poor Yorick. I knew him, Horatio—a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy. He hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how abhorred my imagination is! My gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now, your gambols, your songs, your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now to mock your own grinning? Quite chop-fallen?⁶⁴

Earlier in the play, Hamlet's thoughts of suicide had been plagued by the idea that bad dreams might continue after death ("To die, to sleep. / To sleep, perchance to dream. Ay, there's the rub, / For in that sleep of death what dreams may come / When we have shuffled off this mortal coil / Must give us pause."⁶⁵) Yorick's skull-bone puts memories and imaginations in their proper dramatic setting. They belong to the living. Hamlet is able to see how his memory and fancies are subject to negation; they are limited by the bone. The veil of living shades is cut.

On the other hand, and paradoxically, the "abstract" which becomes alienated from itself is Hamlet's naïve view of the *permanence* of life. Yorick's skull alienates Hamlet from his sense of things as having permanence. Hamlet's recollections of Yorick as a living court jester (upon whose back Hamlet had ridden as a child) are placed in opposition to the skull of Yorick. This impermanence highlights the fact that life *is* like a dream.

So on the one hand, the bone cuts through shadows, but on the other, it reveals life to be like a dream. The combined *Aufhebung* performed by Hamlet in this scene is that the negation presented by death informs his thinking about

the reality of life: Life is not the immediacy of appearance, but it *is* nonetheless like a dream; the permanent reality of negation—*impermanence*—prevents our merging with what we take things to be. It cuts through immediacy and reveals that our life is mediated through our recollection of it. The basis of that mediation is negation.

The graveyard scene therefore marks a transition point in the play. It marks the transition from unclear limits between shadows and reality, toward the unity of thought and being. Hamlet understands the reality, and the role in life, of the final curtain.

THE BONE DE-GHOSTIFIES

Hamlet's experience of the bone demystifies memory. Death has cut off any further drama for Yorick. That final curtain becomes a screen on which Hamlet projects memories of the living man. The sheerness of that negation allows Hamlet's memory of Yorick to arise without contradiction. There is no risk that the memory will leap out from the beyond, or penetrate behind the curtain. The curtain of the bone is opaque and definitive. For Hamlet, Yorick is memory, not ghost.⁶⁶

Hamlet's subsequent discovery that Ophelia is dead has a similar effect on Hamlet, though more emotionally charged. In the face of her death, Hamlet becomes real instead of "seeming." In front of the people gathered to bury her, Hamlet jumps into her grave. This is his first genuine public appearance.⁶⁷ From her grave, he speaks honestly about his love for her. He begins by asserting his true identity "This is I, / Hamlet the Dane"—which means king, not prince, of Denmark. He asserts his truthful condition as rightful successor to his murdered father. Then he yells "I loved Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers / could not, with all their quantity of love, / Make up my sum."⁶⁸ In this instance, Hamlet has achieved an inferential cognition that has led to a willed act.

NEGATION MAKES THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN *GEIST* AND GHOST

Death is apparently an irrational necessity. But Hamlet rightly realizes it as part of thought's process. Let us look more carefully at what is involved in this realization.

Characters go mad because they do not realize the negative. They therefore experience an increasing dissociation of thought and being. Ironically, this dissociation is characterized by an increasing folding in of the present into the past, of subjectivity into shadows, of communication into symbolical idiosyncrasies. The spiraling downfall in anti-*Aufhebung* is that consciousness becomes increasingly misguided by shadows (past inwardizations) that are not free. It becomes more and more symbolical and abstract(ed)ly immediate and thus less and less free.

The solution is the proper grasping of death and the realization of the role of negation in cognition. Negation is freedom. Let us look at this in detail.

DEATH AND THE ROLE OF NEGATION IN COGNITION

In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel writes that:

the life of Spirit is not the life that shrinks from death and keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures it and maintains itself in it. It wins its truth only when, in utter dismemberment, it finds itself. . . . Spirit is this power only by looking the negative in the face, and tarrying with it. This tarrying with the negative is the magical power that converts it into being.⁶⁹

Negation makes determination of limits possible. As we saw, for Hamlet it makes way for proper memory, genuine speech, and willed action. By means of it, Hamlet realizes what his mind's shadows, memories, and projections are. Hegel goes on in the passage cited above to indicate that what is achieved is due to the work of the Subject being uncovered:

This power is what we earlier called the Subject, which by giving determinateness an existence in its own element supersedes abstract immediacy, i.e. the immediacy which barely is, and thus is authentic substance: that being or immediacy whose meditation is not outside of it but which is this mediation itself.⁷⁰

For Hamlet, this occurs because the skull-bone presents him with a ground of being that his subjectivity cannot escape. It presents a nonrepresentable negativity. The skull is a negativity that is both being (a bone) and not-being (the limit of knowing). The skull is thought's negation. Since on the surface this appears to put a limit on the power of his subjectivity, we must now explain how it in fact wakens this power.

The negation presented by the skull is a limit or "irrational necessity" only for judgment, not for thought. Judgment takes what is there as something found, as raw material. But thought grasps the process of cognition in its entirety. This means that the negation of death is just a necessary moment of non-reason in the dialectic of reason. Hegel identifies the pure "I" with death: "Death, if that is what we want to call this non-actuality, is of all things the most dreadful and to hold fast what is dead requires the greatest strength. . . . But the life of Spirit is not the life that shrinks from death. . . ."⁷¹

The apparent inappropriability of the skull as non-thought is a *known* difference from thought. Death as "projected" noumenal other is an abstraction of judgment; *thought* "supersedes that form-difference." As Hegel states in his

Psychology, “inference (syllogism)[, thought] characterizes a content from itself, by superseding that form-difference. With the perception of the necessity, the last immediacy still attaching to formal thought has vanished.”⁷²

Negation is the basis for inferential reason *and thus for will*. This is so because the non-being of mind cannot be appropriated by the representing mind. It therefore presents the first moment of true freedom of thought from its own inwardizations, from shadows. Thus, in the bone, Hamlet realizes theoretically what he shortly thereafter realizes practically, namely, that there *is* real negation of immediacy. In other words, he realizes that it is not a question of subsuming one representation inside another in an endless series that never attains to anything real. The skull enables Hamlet to become real rather than something that merely appears. Negation makes what is determinate really there. Negation frees being into thought.

BUT HAMLET ONLY TAKES NEGATION SO FAR

As we saw above, before the final duel scene, Hamlet becomes fatalistic. Hamlet lets events unravel so far that when he finally performs his “negation” of the king, it is too late for Hamlet to enjoy the release from the drama of revenge. To Hamlet’s credit, however, his fatalism can also be read as a resistance to the form of revenge in which he is caught. If the graveyard also made him realize that revenge was not rational, in the absence of other forms of justice in his society, Hamlet would have had no choice but to let “Fate” unravel, to let negation unravel as contingency. To this extent, Hamlet is simply a fool of time,⁷³ a man in a time of history that is out of joint.

In the light of this, our question for Hegel is: Have we arrived at a time now in which we can rely on a complete form of justice?

FRAMING HISTORY

Hamlet’s death and the framing of his existence by Horatio’s memory repeat the moment of the skull. Hamlet’s thoughtful appreciation of Yorick’s death and of how memory works helps him be at peace (“the rest is silence”). From his experience of Yorick’s skull, Hamlet knows what it means to draw the final curtain and be a memory. This underlies Hamlet’s request that Horatio remember him. Our task has been to make sure that no irrational necessity hovers around Hamlet’s final curtain.

I have argued that the negation of death is a part of the dialectic of consciousness. It is what the “undead” do not have. The “undead” spiral out of control among contradictions that cannot be negated. The proper recognition of negation, of the final curtain, is essential to proper comprehension and

proper action (in other words, essential to good moral imagination and good practical syllogisms). But we have also seen that a ghost's final curtain depends on justice being done.

Hegel's reference to Calvary in the last lines of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* indicates that it is upon the negation of death and the raising of it into thought that all the shapes of *Geist* (spirit) depend.

The *goal*, Absolute Knowing, or Spirit that knows itself as Spirit, has for its path the recollection of the Spirits as they are in themselves and as they accomplish the organization of their realm. Their preservation, regarded from the side of their free existence appearing in the form of contingency, is History; but regarded from the side of their [philosophically] comprehended organization, it is the Science of Knowing in the sphere of appearance: the two together, comprehended History, form alike the inwardizing and the Calvary of absolute Spirit, the actuality, truth, and certainty of his throne, without which he would be lifeless and alone. Only "from the chalice of this realm of spirits / Foams forth for Him his own infinitude."⁷⁴

A proper knowledge of death (the Calvary of absolute Spirit) is the comprehensive final recollection of Spirit.

Hamlet the play puts pressure on Hegel's Absolute Knowing to know death and to recollect its dialectical "plays" properly. In other words, the pressure is on philosophy to show that speculative thought really grasps its Notion comprehensively; that it is neither inferential cognition *tout court*, nor a comprehending that is itself merely a representation that mirrors its earlier plays within plays, or a fatalism that lets things develop without justice.⁷⁵

Conclusion

Is Absolute Knowing Hegel's Horatio? Or does Absolute Knowing do more than rehearse the dialectical plays that make up its history? If it does not do more, the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is the phenomenology of ghost. To make it a phenomenology of *Geist*, consciousness must grasp the truth of Yorick's skull (namely, finality and negation) in a way that *completely* liberates thought from its realm of shadows, from its "gallery of images." And in order for the ghosts of the phenomenology to become *absolute Geist*, negative determination—that place of the skull—must be absolutely *just*. What the nature of that negative

determination is and whether it has developed absolute justice requires further investigation in the chapters which follow.

To begin with, in the next chapter, I look at a particular level of our psychology that keeps us enthralled by Fate (namely, our genius) and I contrast that with wonder, which, according to Hegel, is the urge to overcome contradiction and rise up the ladder of experience.

Chapter 4

The Problem of Genius in *King Lear*

Hegel on the Feeling Soul and the Tragedy of Wonder¹

[G]enius . . . is my destiny; for it is the oracle on whose pronouncement depends every resolve of the individual.

—Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*²

All that follow their noses are led by their eyes but blind men.

—the Fool, *King Lear*³

Does any here know me? This is not Lear. Does Lear walk thus, speak thus? Where are his eyes?

—Lear, *King Lear*⁴

I have no way, and therefore want no eyes; I stumbled when I saw.

—blind Gloucester, *King Lear*⁵

Prudence is the eye of the soul.

—Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*⁶

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the problems of genius in Shakespeare's *King Lear* in relation to Hegel's account of the feeling soul, its genius, and its development into consciousness in the *Encyclopedia Philosophy of Mind*. This is not Hegel's

reading of the play.⁷ But through Hegel's work on the feeling soul, we are able to define Lear's and Cordelia's geniuses as kinds of destiny. We can thereby also explain the shift that occurs in their relationship to their geniuses. Hegel's work helps us to explain the tragic nature of the play.⁸

I also discuss wonder. The shift in Lear and Cordelia is a gradual result of an experience of wonder that these two have at the start of the play. Wonder dislocates the merging character of genius and its habits. Aristotle famously asserted that wonder is the beginning of philosophy. I argue that, in the *Philosophy of Mind*, wonder is the beginning of self-knowledge.

Lear's and Cordelia's initial experience of wonder is traumatic: Each is forced to wonder at the other. The logic of wonder then works its way through the play, leading them to complete themselves through each other. By the end, they both exhibit self-certainty and articulate empathy.

But the collisions at the start of the play also follow the fateful logic of geniuses. The collisions unleash a political dream whose logic Lear and Cordelia do not escape. The play is therefore tragic: Lear and Cordelia begin to have philosophically self-understanding just as their genius' destinies close in. This supervening of Fate over the achievements of Wonder makes *Lear* a tragedy of wonder.

I defend Hegel against Schmitz's critique, in *The Recovery of Wonder*, that Hegel's philosophy is not adequate to the kind of wonder philosophy needs to recover. My analysis of the place of wonder in the *Philosophy of Mind* and in *Lear* shows why we need Hegel in this recovery. We need to understand what Hegel means by making subject and substance equal in dialectical importance. Without reducing Hegel's view to a metaphysics of things, I show that it is consistent with Schmitz' call for a metaphysics of things. The tragedy of *Lear*, like much modern philosophy, reveals that the birth of consciousness (and therefore the beginning of philosophy) often does violence to bodies. Bodies are our organs of discovery. To prevent violence, we must respect their pure potentiality and indifference to utility.

Part I. Hegel on the Feeling Soul and Its Genius

Hegel's discussion of the "Feeling Soul" (*Die fühlende Seele*⁹) is found in his *Anthropology* (the first subsection of "Mind Subjective" in Hegel's *Encyclopedia Philosophy of Mind*¹⁰). Let me begin, as Hegel does, with a few words about the nature of the soul in general, and then discuss the feeling soul in particular.

The Soul in General

Hegel is Aristotelian with regard to the soul: "The soul is no separate immaterial entity."¹¹ The soul is rather the "ideal life" of the natural:

Soul is the *substance* or “absolute” basis of all the particularizing and individualizing of mind: it is in the soul that mind finds the material on which its character is wrought, and the soul remains the pervading, identical ideality of it all. But as it is still conceived thus abstractly, the soul is only the *sleep* of mind—the passive of Aristotle, which is potentially all things.¹²

Despite its simplicity, the soul “is not yet mind.”¹³ The reason for this will become clear as we proceed.

Hegel discusses the soul in three sections: the “Physical Soul,” the “Feeling Soul,” and the “Actual Soul.” The first is the “natural soul, which only *is*.” The second (the *feeling* soul) is individualized in the sense that it is in a relationship to the first, immediate being and “retains an abstract independence” from it. Finally, the actual soul is the synthesis of the corporeal immediacy of the physical body and the abstract independence of feeling soul.¹⁴

The Feeling Soul

The feeling soul is the negative, middle moment in this dialectical progression from the natural to the actual soul. It is negative because it negates or sunders from the immediacy of the physical, and it is the middle because its self-sundering and self-relating activity, once sufficiently complex, constitutes the activity of the actual soul.

The feeling soul’s function is to raise the merely corporeal—the soul’s “virtual filling-up”¹⁵—into subjectivity. Its job is “to take possession” of the body, “to realize its mastery over its own.”¹⁶

According to Hegel, the feeling soul is a singular inwardness of feeling. It embraces the corporeal in itself as its substance.¹⁷ Hegel does not mention Aristotle here, but we can once again think of his theory of the soul, in particular his theory of the *sensus communis*.¹⁸ Hegel’s feeling soul does not experience the multiple parts of the external body as divisions of the soul. Rather, (like the *sensus communis*) it gathers them up into one experience. “[T]he ‘real’ outness of parts in the body has no truth for the sentient soul.”¹⁹ The feeling soul in the body is “one simple, omnipresent unity.”²⁰

But we must also think of something akin to, though certainly not the same as, Kant’s synthetic unity of apperception. Kant’s unity is known to the self as the “I” that accompanies all my representations.²¹ While Hegel’s feeling soul is not this self-conscious “I” it is nonetheless a synthetic unity. It gathers the multiplicity of corporeal experience together into “an intelligible unity” which Hegel calls “the existent speculative principle.”²²

To add to the mix, Hegel explicitly invites us to think of Leibniz: The “soul is a monad.”²³ For “The soul is the totality of nature . . . it is itself the explicitly put totality of its particular world—that world being included in it

and filling it up; and to that world it stands but as to itself.”²⁴ The feeling soul reduces the multiplicity of outward parts of the body to “ideality (the truth of the natural simplicity).”²⁵

Finally, Hegel is careful to distinguish this unity from consciousness. (We can now explain why the soul is “not yet mind.”) The feeling soul is individual, but it is not aware of the separateness of its object in the way that consciousness is: “its [the soul’s] object is its substance.”²⁶ As such, “this stage of mind is the stage of its darkness.”²⁷ (Indeed, if a fully developed *consciousness* falls back into this stage, it is disease, often outright insanity.²⁸) The soul’s efforts are precisely to develop a dialectical complexity with itself as substance so that it rises out of its *sensus-communis*-like, monadic existence, enough to become a conscious “I”:

What we have therefore to consider [with the feeling soul] . . . is the struggle for the liberation which the soul has to wage against the immediacy of its substantial content in order to become completely master of itself and adequate to its Notion, or to make itself into what it is *in itself* or in its *Notion*, namely, into that self-related, *simple* subjectivity which exists in the “I.”²⁹

The Feeling Soul goes through three *moments* in this struggle. These are (α) The feeling soul in its immediacy, (β) Self-feeling, and (γ) Habit. Hegel summarizes the development:

In the first stage we see the soul entangled in the dreaming away and dim presaging of its concrete and natural life. In order to comprehend the miraculous element in this form of the soul . . . we must bear in mind that here the soul is still in immediate, undifferentiated unity with its objectivity.

The second stage is the standpoint of *insanity*, which means the soul divided against itself, on the one hand already master of itself, and on the other hand not yet master of itself, but held fast in an isolated particularity in which it has its actuality.

Lastly, in the third stage, the soul becomes master of its natural individually, of its bodily nature, reduces this to a subservient means, and projects from itself as an objective world that content of its substantial totality which does *not* belong to its bodily nature. Reaching this goal, the soul appears in the abstract freedom of the “I” and thus becomes *consciousness*.³⁰

The conclusion of this triad is also the conclusion of the overarching development of the soul into its *actual* shape, which in turn is the moment

in which consciousness arises. The moments of the feeling soul are therefore the last shapes of subconscious experience prior to consciousness. Genius is a function of the first moment in this subconscious triad, that is, it is a function of the feeling soul in its immediacy. Our genius is therefore subconscious.

Let us look in more detail at how genius fits into this overarching development.

I mentioned the sundering, self-doubling character of the feeling soul. Hegel explains that the feeling soul is itself but “not yet as its self.”³¹ The soul is not reflected into itself. It is *passive*.³² The interesting thing about this condition of doubleness and passivity is that, even though the feeling is one of unified individuality, the organizing principle of the unity can be *but does not have to be* the same as that which is unified.

The unified substance (the feeling soul) is “only a non-independent predicate” of something.

Thus, on the one hand, the feeling soul can be a predicate of *its own* dreams. Indeed, this is the first “state” of the feeling soul in its immediacy. In dreaming, “the individual who has attained to a feeling of himself is gripped in a simple, immediate self-relation, and this, his being-for self, has at least the *form* of subjectivity.”³³ On the other hand, the soul can equally have its guiding principle in another. The example Hegel gives is that of the “child in the mother’s womb:—a condition neither merely bodily nor merely mental, but psychical—a correlation of soul to soul. Here are two individuals, yet in undivided psychic unity.”³⁴

In either case, the unified substance (the self in dreams or the child in the womb) is “set in vibration and controlled without the least resistance on its part.”³⁵

The Feeling Soul’s Genius

Here, Hegel gives us his definition of genius: “[t]his other subject by which it [the soul] is so controlled may be called its *genius*.”³⁶

Now, the formal subjectivity of the self in dreaming is not quite a genius, whereas the mother is the genius of the child in her womb.³⁷ But this notion of genius, this state of passive influence is not limited to the mother-child link. First, Hegel writes that

[s]poradic examples and traces of this *magic* tie appear elsewhere in the range of self-possessed conscious life, say between friends, especially female friends with delicate nerves (a tie which may go so far as to show “magnetic” phenomena), between husband and wife and between members of the same family.³⁸

Second, as the soul develops, it ceases to be controlled by a genius that is other to it and becomes a genius to itself. In that third moment of the feeling soul, the soul unifies the first two moments in a higher stage. That is, the self that, in the dream, was merely the form of subjectivity, becomes that which replaces the genius from outside. The outer influence is replaced by an “inner oracle.”³⁹ This is genius proper:

Th[is] third mode in which the human soul achieves the feeling of its totality is the relation of the individual to his *genius*. By *genius*, we are to understand the particular nature of a man which, in every situation and circumstance, decides his action and destiny.⁴⁰

The self is not dreaming, nor is it directed by something outside it: The self is self-directed, but nonetheless not completely conscious. As we mature, this must change.

Ideally, we eventually become the “dominant genius” to ourselves.⁴¹

The self-possessed and healthy subject has an active and present consciousness of the ordered whole of his individual world, into the system of which he subsumes each special content of sensation, idea, desire, inclination, etc., as it arises, so as to inset them in their proper place. He is the dominant genius over these particularities.⁴²

So the overall struggle of the feeling soul is to develop its genius as *its own*. Then, it develops its relationship to its genius into a *conscious* relationship between subjectivity and external world. At that point, the person is no longer subservient to the work of her genius upon her. Hegel points out, however, that even at this later stage of conscious life, we often have the feeling of being led by Fate, Providence, or Magic. That feeling is nothing other than a sensibility toward our genius.⁴³

Before we discuss the problem of genius in *Lear*, we must discuss the concept of wonder.

Part II. Wonder⁴⁴

Wonder as a Beginning

Aristotle famously asserted that philosophy starts with wonder.⁴⁵ In Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature*, Hegel agrees that wonder is a beginning. But for Hegel, wonder is only a beginning. We must engage the labour of coming-to-know what we wonder at; that labour produces comprehensive knowledge. The moment

of wonder does not disappear for it is necessary. But it is not sufficient for speculative science.

Hegel's account in the *Philosophy of Nature* is revealing on several fronts:

What is nature? It is through the knowledge and the philosophy of nature that we propose to find the answer to this general question. *We find nature before us as an enigma and a problem*, the solution of which seems to both attract and repel us; it attracts us in that spirit has a presentiment of itself in nature; it repulses us in that nature is an alienation in which spirit does not find itself. *From this arose Aristotle's dictum that philosophy has its origin in wonder*. We begin to observe, and we collect data from the multifarious formations and laws of nature, which may be pursued for their own sake into endless detail in all directions; and because we can see no end to this procedure, it leaves us unsatisfied. What is more, despite all this wealth of knowledge, the question, "What is nature?" can always be asked and never completely answered. It remains a problem. When we see nature's processes and transmutations, we want to grasp its simple essence, and force this Proteus to relinquish his transformations, to reveal himself to us, and to speak out; not so that he merely dupes us with an everchanging variety of new forms, but so that he renders himself to consciousness in a more simple way, through language. This quest for *being* has a multiple meaning. . . .

We could resort immediately to the philosophical Idea, and say that the philosophy of nature should provide us with the Idea of nature. To begin in this way might however be confusing. *Our task is to grasp the Idea of itself in its concreteness; and so to apprehend and bring together its different determinations; in order to take possession of the Idea, we therefore have to work through a series of determinations, by means of which the Idea first comes into being for us. . . . We relate ourselves to nature partly in practice and partly in theory*. A contradiction in the theoretical view will become apparent and will, in the third instance, open the way to our standpoint; in order to resolve the contradiction we must incorporate what is peculiar to the practical relationship, and in this way *both the practical and theoretical approaches will be united and integrated into totality*.⁴⁶

Similarly, in the Preface to his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel rejects *love* of knowing in favor of *actual* knowing:⁴⁷ The *Phenomenology*, he declares, provides a *science* of experience. I will address the unity of theory and practice that is implied in this scientific experience, in a moment.

Wonder in the *Philosophy of Mind*

Wonder is not discussed in Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind*. I cannot speculate here as to why this is so. But since Hegel has elsewhere used the word in the Aristotelian sense, we can hypothesize its place in the *Philosophy of Mind*. Consistency demands that it would be a *beginning* of something. In the *Philosophy of Mind*, we are concerned with the science of mind. Wonder must therefore come at the beginning of the mind's *knowledge* of mind.

The soul is not sufficiently self-differentiated to have an experience of wonder. The child in the womb is not in a condition of wonder toward its mother: The child merely "vibrates" with her genius. By contrast, the hallmark of consciousness is that it is aware of the distinction between self and other and therefore aware of influences upon itself.⁴⁸ Wonder arises, therefore, in the transition from the soul to consciousness. The transition from the *Anthropology* to the *Phenomenology* is a transition from a pre-conscious soul affected by subconscious influences, to consciousness. The place of wonder in the *Encyclopedia*, therefore, is at the end of the *Anthropology* and the beginning of the *Phenomenology*.

Wonder Is Consciousness' Urge to Overcome Contradiction

We can be even more specific about what is entailed in this transition. Hegel writes of consciousness that "along with the abstract certainty of being at home with itself, mind has the directly opposite certainty of being related to something essentially other to it. This contradiction must be resolved."⁴⁹ According to Hegel, the entire project of consciousness is to raise contradiction to self-certainty and truth by comprehending the contradiction as the dialectical relationship between self and other.

Hegel asserts next that "*the urge to resolve it [the contradiction] lies in the contradiction itself*."⁵⁰ The urge to overcome the contradiction is always already a part of the contradiction and is what drives the development from the soul to consciousness. In other words, that contradiction is actively present in the *soul*, but not something of which the soul was aware (we saw that the soul is passive to its genius). It is only as consciousness that the urge is a dislocation of the soul from its genius.⁵¹

The dislocation is the moment when otherness ceases to be subconscious influence and opens up as possibility. It is the transition from oracle to the possibility of proper speech, from predestination to the beginning of philosophical self-determination.

Hegel's description of the project of consciousness at the beginning of the *Encyclopedia Phenomenology* is similar to his description of the project of consciousness in natural science in the *Philosophy of Nature*:

Subjective certainty must not find itself limited by the object but must acquire true objectivity; and, conversely, the object, on its side, must become *mine* not merely in an abstract manner but with regard to every aspect of its concrete nature. This goal is already anticipated by Reason which *believes* in itself, but is attained only by the Reason that *knows*, by *comprehensive cognition*.⁵²

A similar project is developed in the experience of sense-certainty in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

The beginning of such projects of consciousness is consciousness' urge to overcome contradiction. The proof that this beginning is wonder lies in Hegel's *Lectures on Aesthetics*: "the sense of this contradiction along with the urge to remove it is precisely what generates wonder [*die Verwunderung*]." ⁵³

The Inseparability of Theory and Practice in Wonder

It is important to note in all of this that in Hegel's dialectic, theory and practice are not separable.⁵⁴ We saw this in our citation above from the *Philosophy of Nature*. Theory and practice unite. Likewise, in the *Philosophy of Mind*, theory and practice unite as self-knowledge. This has to do with the beginning of philosophy in an *urge*, as well as the end of philosophy as the realization that we must grasp the true equally as substance and subject.⁵⁵ Wonder is the experience in which theory and practice become, dialectically, the development of philosophical knowing.

But let us look more at wonder as this urge to overcome contradiction. It is clear that wonder has a teleological pull. In that respect, wonder is like desire: It is a pull toward something. But unlike desire, the pull is not connected with consuming or incorporating the other. Wonder is what drives the dialectic forward.

If we place wonder where we have, then we see that this urge (that wonder is), is related to dreams. On the one hand, wonder arises as the moment when the soul comes out of its dreaming relationship to its other and enters consciousness. In this sense, wonder is traumatic. It dislocates the soul's dreamscape, derailing genius' destiny. On the other, wonder is related to dreams because it is pure teleology, a feeling, an urge, a being-toward. Just as we are captivated by what traumatizes us, we are captivated by wonder. We wonder at our landscape and move toward more of it.

If we are to avoid merely repeating the traumatic moment—being caught in an eternal return—the urge must fulfill itself. That is, the urge to overcome contradiction must produce knowledge about its contradictions. Fortunately, wonder is not just admiration, not just theory. It is the practical urge to move toward its object—not in order to merge with it, but in order to comprehend it.

In conclusion, for Hegel, wonder is *only* a beginning and not the completed experience of speculative wisdom. To arrive completely at the proper language for experience is to begin to be able to know with self-certainty and empathy, to begin to know the “I” that is a “we” and the “we” that is an “I.” And for Hegel, to begin to develop the proper language for experience is to begin to know oneself as Spirit.⁵⁶

Consciousness has the urge to overcome its limits and as such is implicitly Spirit. But it does not yet know Spirit as the outcome of that process. Wonder, as the urge of consciousness to overcome contradiction, is the beginning of speculative wisdom and therefore of Spirit’s development.

Part III. Schmitz on the Recovery of Wonder

In *The Recovery of Wonder*,⁵⁷ Schmitz traces the history of thought from the Greeks to the present in terms of how we think “things” and their causes. He claims that from the high metaphysics of Aristotle and Plato, through to the Medieval Schoolmen’s Christianization of that, there is some consistency with regard to viewing things and their causes as external to the subject. He explains that as the modern enlightenment era developed, truth and causation lost their external character, becoming qualities of the human subject. The Enlightenment declared knowledge to be determined by human judgment and viewed the human will a free, autonomous source of causation. As modernity progressed, that complete freedom of the subject was faced by a world of discrete objects that were to be understood through empirical scientific observation and used for the subject’s ends.

Schmitz traces the modern changes to Descartes’ Cogito and finds its completion in the Kantian Copernican Revolution. Schmitz claims that even though some post-Kantians do open up the subject to larger notions (such as Hegel’s Absolute Spirit, which encompasses the single individual within the historically developed community), these post-Kantians do not return us to a metaphysics of *res* (things).

Schmitz claims that, while this new view of things and of our own freedom has led to marvelous advances in our control of and insight into nature, something important has been lost. What has been lost is the ancient and medieval view of a thing and of a human subject each existing in a community of other things and other subjects, whose interdependence and interrelatedness are beyond the scope of a single human subject or even community of knowers. What has been lost is a sense of the givenness of things, of their cause lying not in our own judgment about them, but as having been created. He advocates rediscovering the wonder of looking at something as a gift.

Schmitz does not want us to go backward in time and take up an antiquated metaphysics that rejects the developments of the modern world. He

calls for a new look based on the developed history of metaphysics, one that puts modernity in its place within our history (rather than agreeing with post-modernity that history has ended).

Schmitz points us beyond our view of things as merely or primarily useful. He reengages the Schoolmen's association of "certain transcendental and omnipresent characteristics with being."⁵⁸ These are, first, the truth or intelligibility of things, that "capacity in things to respond to the questions with which we approach them and even to draw those questions out of us";⁵⁹ second, the transcendental good in things that is "worthy of respect in itself, as when we admire the gait of a tiger but prefer the gate to be closed."⁶⁰ Schmitz asserts that "it is this power or actuality in things that engenders wonder in us."⁶¹

According to Schmitz, this is not limited to the Kantian experience of the sublime since "we do not simply experience the superiority of our freedom through the independence and resistance of things; we recognize instead a kind of secret mutual bond, and we also sense the thickness of that bond."⁶² Finally, according to Schmitz the Schoolmen recognized the beauty in things: "things quicken with a *luminosity* and *effulgence* that expresses a distinctive configuration . . . a characteristic which escapes the confines of species and transgresses the formal limits of the thing even as it heightens their formal quality." For Schmitz, this "is the grace that invites us to celebrate the rhythm of things, the call to music, poetry, and art. It is the very 'dance' of things."⁶³

Schmitz concludes:

Even today, these properties of the reality of things invite us to look beyond their familiar presence to the mystery of things themselves: and in *seeing them anew* we are invited to recover the wondrous splendour that gives rise to *theôria*. It is in the recognition of our solidarity with things (*aliquid*) that we find a fuller freedom.⁶⁴

Schmitz is a Catholic philosopher and his argument exhibits that conviction. His view is challenging and inviting and right in important ways, even for non-Catholic and non-monotheistic philosophers. As Schmitz rightly points out, our current environmental situation calls for us to stop viewing the world in an anthropocentrically utility-based way. I would add that, even if we do not go so far as to see the natural world as the creation of God, we need to regain a sense of wonder at nature if we are to counter current trends leading us into a human-made world that is out of touch with its own survival.

Nonetheless, the idea of engaging in a metaphysics of being with its corresponding return to *theôria* sounds one-sided. We have seen that Hegel's dialectic unites a metaphysics of being with a metaphysics of subjectivity, and theory with practice. This seems to me the best approach for achieving a recovery of wonder. Hegel is committed to substance as much as to subject ("everything turns on grasping and expressing the True, not only as *Substance*, but equally

as *Subject*⁶⁵). Given this, Schmitz is wrong to claim that Hegel's commitment to subjectivity does not allow him to develop a metaphysics of things. Let me argue this point as follows.

First, let us address the question of a metaphysics of things. I agree with Schmitz that we do not want to be blind at the moment we think we see most clearly. In other words, we do not want the certainty and freedom of the modernized Cogito to blind us to the given. I agree, therefore, that we must ensure that theory is not oracle, that our encounter with otherness is not a traumatic one in which we seek mastery through violence. But this is why we need Hegel: for according to him, the urge of consciousness to overcome the contradiction which consciousness itself is, is to be comprehended in terms of a metaphysics of substance as well as a metaphysics of subjectivity. As we will see shortly, a Hegelian account of *Lear*, one which draws on the dialectical nature of subject and object, reveals the logic involved in violence (that of fate), and reveals how to avoid that violence by means of a different logic (that of wonder as the beginning of self-knowledge).

Second, let us address Schmitz' call for *theōria*. According to Schmitz, wonder is a kind of admiration: It is a theoretical attitude toward the given. By contrast, in Hegel, theory is inseparable from praxis.⁶⁶ This does not mean that, according to Hegel, the will dominates *theōria*. It means that there is a balanced dialectic between subject and object. If this were not the case, wonder could not arise. For wonder arises as an *aporetic* encounter with the other; an encounter in which the other is separate from ourselves (and from our desire to vibrate with or consume it). That encounter marks out for us the *urge* within us to overcome contradiction, the urge which drives the dialectical development in any coming-to-know.

The inseparability of theory and praxis has its origins in the fact that consciousness is a contradiction with itself and an *urge* to overcome that contradiction. We do not rest in knowledge; knowledge is our practice.

Finally, for Hegel, wonder is just the beginning: We need to develop that *aporia* into actual knowledge. This is not a return to a subjective condition, for, just as the actual soul is being, reason (at much more developed level) is also being.

Thus to conclude here, insofar as we consider the beginning of the philosophy of *mind* and therefore the beginning of *self*-knowledge, we place wonder at the inception of consciousness. Wonder is the initial trauma of realizing that being one is a contradiction to oneself. For Hegel as much as for Schmitz, the Cogito is not a solution, for it ignores the substantial side of the contradiction: It ignores the objectivity, the givenness at which we wonder. The urge to overcome the contradiction has both a content side and an active side, a spatial and a temporal side (a *bestehende* and *vergehende* side).⁶⁷ Wonder is not just a theoretical attitude toward a given. It is a dislocation, an *aporia*, a breach in the

flow of dreams which wakes us (from our merely theoretical or merely practical attitude). It is that which makes us step out of the comfort of our genius into the alienation of difference. Wonder is the trauma that wakes us up to otherness, thereby initiating the possibility of empathy as well as self-certainty. But wonder would remain traumatic if it did not develop into something more than the breach of dreams.

So Schmitz is right to assert that wonder is always of something, toward something. Whether we call this the “given” or the “substantial actuality of being that is both substance and subject” is irrelevant. My point is that Hegel’s philosophy offers us something without which we cannot properly recover wonder: namely, the insight that whatever we might wonder at, we cannot separate that wonder from the primordial urge of consciousness to know (itself/being) more completely.

To illustrate how Hegel’s dialectic contributes to our understanding of fate, wonder, and knowledge, let us turn to *Lear*.

Part IV. Lear’s Genius and the Tragedy of Wonder

The play *The Tragedy of King Lear* is a dreamscape of geniuses. The dream in general is Fate: It is the destinies of the geniuses. Within this dreamscape, Wonder, the beginning of wisdom, grows. These two logics—that of Fate and that of Wonder—work their way through the play.

The Problem of Geniuses and Their Logic of Fate in
The Tragedy of King Lear

Quality and Quantity

Since a genius is both one and two without knowing it, it fails to properly relate quality and quantity. It does so either by equating them, or keeping them absolutely distinct. In the first case, it fixates on measures of power; in the second, it merges empathically. Let us take each in turn.

According to the dictates of Lear’s “inner oracle,” his kingdom is to be parceled out in proportion to the quality of his daughters’ adoration speeches. Lear invites his daughters to verbally quantify their love and in return, Lear, god-like, will give them parts of the earth to rule. Regan and Goneril comply. They provide a chorus for his oracular self.⁶⁸ They chime in—vibrate—with his genius. Lear’s soul feels no dissonance since their incantations are properly tuned to it. Indeed they know that they will get more land if they make their love inestimably large: Goneril: “Sir, I love you more than words can wield the matter; Dearer than eyesight, space, and liberty. . . . Beyond all manner of so

much. . . .”⁶⁹ Similarly, Regan says of her sister “I find she names my very deed of love—/ Only she comes too short.”⁷⁰ Regan rejects all pleasures “which the most precious square of sense possesses” and she finds herself “alone felicitate in your dear Highness’ love.”

But his third daughter, Cordelia, does not chime in:

Lear: “Speak.”

Cordelia: “Nothing, my lord.”

Lear: “Nothing?”

Cordelia: “Nothing.”

Lear: “Nothing will come of nothing. Speak again.”

Cordelia: “Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave

My heart into my mouth. I love your majesty

According to my bond; no more nor less.”⁷¹

Cordelia’s silent and strange language affronts Lear’s genius. He is threatened because it dislocates his sense of destiny. She has rejected the logic of his oracle. He is forced out of his complacent self-adoration (with its vibrating chorus). He is forced to wonder.

Initially, Lear suppresses his wonder.⁷² He rejects Cordelia because he thinks that Cordelia has rejected him. He is partially right, for she has rejected his genius. But he is wrong that she has rejected her *father*. She loves him.

In one respect, Lear is right to chastise her. The kind of love she bears him is related to *her* failure to separate herself from *her* particular kind of genius. She also, like Lear, has not achieved a proper consciousness of her political surroundings.

Her soul is more like the child in the womb than a man caught in the dreamscape of his own genius. She loves and does not speak. Her inner oracle is the opposite of Lear’s relating of quality to quantity: Hers is the unspoken belief that quality (feeling) cannot become quantity (word). Ironically, her soul cannot even declare this for that would be to put the quality of her feeling into words. Instead, she meekly asserts that she “cannot heave her heart into her mouth.” For Cordelia, quality cannot be located. She expects to vibrate with her father. Her word “Nothing” is the closest she can come to expressing that vibration.

Lear and Cordelia are feeling souls, each related to their geniuses in a way that is not salutary in human affairs. Neither is more articulate than the other. Though Cordelia’s silence makes her appear more admirable (indeed closer to the wonder needed for philosophy), in fact, her language, like Lear’s, is that of a soul’s genius, not the language of consciousness. Her raw empathy is not ethical sensitivity.

The Dislocating Effect of Trauma and of Wonder

Their encounter is dislocation. When Cordelia encounters Lear, her soul does not have a fixed location. This lack is itself dislocated as a result of the encounter. For this lack is what her father turns on her as a fate: She will not have any land, and this lack of dower is offered as grounds for rejection by suitors; if Lear has his way, she will have no place in the social order. The comfortable vibrations of her silent genius have loud political consequences.⁷³ She cannot but wonder at this.

Her original lack of location also dislocates her father. His soul becomes dislocated from its genius: His words and the destiny they invoke become something other. Lear feels his purposiveness, but the purpose is now unclear. He is in a condition of wonder. This interruption dislocates Lear's speech more and more as the play develops.

Therefore, there emerge two kinds of dislocation, one within the other. Within the bad dislocations there is the good check of wonder. Wonder sets up an alternative to the destiny of genius. It sets up the possibility of conscious self-knowledge.

Banishing and Hypocrisy vs. Uniting Theory and Practice

The response of genius to difference is not just to retaliate but to banish from sight or to engage in hypocrisy. Let us take each in turn.

Lear banishes Cordelia and Kent (who pleads on Cordelia's behalf). To Cordelia, Lear says "Hence, and avoid my sight;"⁷⁴ to Kent, "Out of my sight!"⁷⁵ Kent protests: "See better, Lear; and let me still remain / The true blank of thine eye."⁷⁶ While Regan and Goneril chime in Lear's chorus, those who contradict his judgment offend his eyes.

By contrast, Regan's and Goneril's genius deal with difference by severing theory and practice. Their loving words are never acted upon.

Cordelia, however, recognizes in what is going on, a distinction and interconnection of theory and practice. In this, she is closer (than Lear and her sisters) to the urge to overcome contradiction. She attempts to correct Lear's impression that she merely presents a theory that contradicts his. In her reply, she makes clear that a true assessment of her must take theory *and* practice, sight *and* action into account. Her reply is a rejection of her sisters' hypocrisy, "that glib and oily art, / To speak and purpose not."⁷⁷ She insists that *her* intentions will be born out in action.

Kent likewise rejects hypocrisy. He challenges Goneril and Regan: "your large speeches may your deeds approve / That good effects may spring from words of love."⁷⁸

But at this point in the play, Cordelia cannot convince. Lear and her sisters are busy responding to her earlier naïve empathy. Her argument gets lost in the dreamscape of words and images. Later in the play, she develops her insight into action and becomes properly political. This change in her, will, in part, have resulted from her initial encounter with Lear that we discussed above. It is that encounter that interrupts her genius' empathy and causes her to wonder. It generates in her the urge to overcome the contradictions into which her genius, and Lear's, have plunged her. But we can see from her reply that her initial step in this process has been to argue, first, against her father's theory about her (and her entrapment as a kind of theory that must be banished) and second, against her sisters' hypocrisy in keeping theory and practice apart.

The Logic of Fate vs. the Logic of Wonder

The Logic of Fate

In his response to Cordelia, Lear chooses his genius—his soul's dream—over his paternal feelings and responsibilities. In that moment, he chooses his particularity over the universal, a choice which for Hegel defines evil.⁷⁹ (In this, we have something of an explanation of Hegel's off-the-cuff remark that "Shakespeare . . . in *Lear* . . . brings evil before us in its entire dreadfulness."⁸⁰) Lear blocks his wonder at her words. His genius condemns her and therein sets a troubled course for his future.

Cordelia also chooses her particular genius over the universal. We might think her genius closer to the universal good, since its shape is empathy. But it is equally one-sided, and therefore her choice is as evil as Lear's. She exemplifies the evil of the "beautiful soul."⁸¹ Her empathy cannot express a rational real any more than Lear's oracular selfishness can. The logic of her evil genius also works its way through the plot.

So far, the logic of their fates is as follows. Cordelia, the genius whose oracle is only qualitatively *felt*, is banished by the genius who hears only its own quantifying, hegemonic oracle. The latter, narcissistic genius attacks because it cannot tolerate otherness. Lear is then attacked in the same manner by other geniuses who cannot tolerate *his* otherness.

The other characters aid the fateful logic of geniuses. Most do so by being exaggerations of Larian or Cordelian genius: They are either oracular power-mongers (Goneril, Regan, Edmund), or empathic souls without power (Edgar).⁸² The first kind of character is passive to their genius and to its spell of power.⁸³ The second kind is captive of their innocence. They become captives of a world illegitimately determined by others. They turn inward upon themselves, becoming captives of their own inner worlds, worlds dislocated from what others see.

These characters' naïve empathy-turned-imaginary is closer to the wonder that is the basis of open-ended relationship to otherness. From their dislocation, they are able to judge differently. Such characters need to externalize their judgment before they can begin to mature. But when they first do so, they use mad symbolic language. They transition through Hegel's second level of the feeling soul: self-feeling or the madness of contradiction. (In a moment, we will discuss how Lear joins these characters when he appears to go mad.) Edgar's development is a case in point: he traces the process from naïve empathy through madness (as Poor Tom) to ethical certainty. But he is the only one in the play to develop from genius to consciousness and *survive* the process.⁸⁴

So, to summarize, at the start of the play, we have those who want power (quantity) on the one side, and those who want love (quality) on the other. These geniuses constitute the thick, dreamlike world of the plot. The logic of Fate in this play is this dreaming logic of geniuses. Geniuses seek to annihilate what contradicts them. It is a zero-sum game, a view of contradiction in which only one side can win.

In this logic of Fate, conflict is cruel. We have already seen how Lear's genius attacks Cordelia's. Let us look at how Lear fares.

Lear's genius sees itself as the great quantifier, counting and dispensing worth (of words and of people). Goneril and Regan make him suffer for this. In Act 2 Scene 2, these sisters cruelly play with him by progressively reducing the number of men they will allow to attend him:

Regan [to Lear]: "... I entreat you
To bring but five and twenty. To no more
Will I give place or notice."
Lear: "I gave you all—"
Regan: "In good time you gave it."
Lear: "... What, must I come to you
With five and twenty, Regan? Said you so?"
Regan: "And speak't again, my lord; no more with me. (...)"
Lear [to Goneril]: "I'll go with thee.
Thy fifty yet doth double five-and-twenty,
And thou art twice her love."
Goneril: "Hear me, my lord.
What need you five and twenty, ten, or five,
To following in a house where twice so many
Have a command to tend you?"
Regan: "What need one?"⁸⁵

This is painful to Lear because his genius' worth is measured in the number of his adoring and subservient subjects. The sisters are cutting back his chorus.

On one side, then, we have the logic of Fate acting on Cordelia and Lear: the cruel designing of geniuses who torment by intentionally hitting the other where they know it will hurt most. But there is another logic at work.

The Logic of Wonder

In the encounter between Lear and Cordelia, the logic of wonder is initiated into the plot. Lear and Cordelia wonder at the violence that the other does to their feeling soul. Each wonders at the dislocation of their soul from their genius. Lear and Cordelia are each checked by the other into consciousness of a larger ethical sphere. Lear's oracular power is gradually shot through with Cordelian empathy, and Cordelia's empathy becomes articulated by strategy (of war).

Let me briefly trace Lear's development, then Cordelia's.

Just as Fate causes him to suffer his genius, Lear's wonder puts into question the established story of his genius. In wonder, the link between quality and quantity is opened up. Wonder is purposiveness whose purpose has yet to be revealed. It is a being-toward.

Lear's struggle to understand eventually drives him to be-toward the most elemental and existential of things: the storm on the heath. There, Lear enters into a relationship with the elements. He gives up his genius' efforts to control exchange. Lear cries out:

Rumble thy bellyful! Spit, fire! spout, rain!
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters:
I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness;
I never gave you kingdom, called you children,
You owe me no subscription. Then let fall
Your horrible pleasure. Here I stand, your slave,
A poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man.⁸⁶

Lear also discovers Poor Tom on the heath. For Lear, Poor Tom (dispossessed Edgar) represents the sheer nakedness of the human condition. Poor Tom is nothing *but* being-toward (by Edgar's own words, he is "poor Tom! / That's something yet! Edgar I nothing am.")⁸⁷ Lear says:

Is man no more than this? Consider him well.
Thou owest the worm no silk, the beast no hide,
the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume. Ha, here's
three on's are sophisticated! Thou are the thing
itself; unaccommodated man is no more but such
a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art. Off, off,
you lendings! come unbutton here. [Lear takes
his own clothes off].⁸⁸

Lear also recognizes for the first time the otherness of other people, and he senses their suffering:

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
Your looped and windowed raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en
Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp;
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
That thou mayst shake the superflux to them,
And show the heavens more just.⁸⁹

As for Cordelia's wonder, it makes her question the established story of her genius (that she is pure empathy, a quality that cannot be put into words or embodied in land). Since she is not the focus of the play, we do not see her wonder develop on stage. But we do see that it has developed, for when she comes back on stage, she is a queen and soldier:

Messenger: "News, madam.
The British powers are marching hitherward."
Cordelia: "'Tis known before; our preparation stands
In expectation of them. O dear father,
It is thy business that I go about;
...
No blown ambition doth our arms incite,
But love, dear love, and our aged father's right."⁹⁰

A Dialectic of Wonders

The play traces two developments: Lear's development from oracular destiny to being-toward and true speech, and Cordelia's development from raw empathy to political integrity. Both developments occur as a result of Lear's and Cordelia's encounter. The dream-logic of their geniuses is interrupted by the dislocating logic of wonder. They move from subconscious urges to the conscious urges of philosophy.

The two developments are related. What Lear and Cordelia need in order to develop is the truth of the other's genius, raised, through wonder, to consciousness. Each needs to *consciously* experience what the other's genius experienced *subconsciously*. Thus Lear needs to experience his self as purposive-ness whose purpose has yet to be declared. He needs to be in touch with his

existential condition in which the future is undetermined and yet nonetheless in need of articulation. He needs the qualitative side of experience. Cordelia, on her side, needs to experience the historically concrete forms of purpose that someone with an oracular, articulate, self-certain genius generates. Each needs to consciously develop the contradiction of purposiveness without a purpose (quality) and destiny or purposiveness with a purpose (quantity). They would each thereby complete their respective conceptual framework. For the truth about worth is that it *is* quantitative but its distribution must be based on discussions of need according to agreed principles of equity; the truth about empathy is that it *does* defy any final quantification but to be effective it must express itself concretely according to the particularity of circumstance.

Geniuses seek to get rid of one side of contradiction. But wonder is the urge of *consciousness* to embrace and overcome the contradiction.

Self-certainty and empathy together are the hallmark of humane reason. Each finds its completion only in and through the other. This occurs in and through the concrete self-understandings of a maturing spirit. Neither Lear nor Cordelia achieve the highest levels of such knowing (of Spirit—what Hegel calls “Absolute Knowing”). But by the end of the play, they have achieved the language necessary to begin that process.

The evidence is that near the end of the play, their speeches exhibit indifference to Fate and a commitment to wonder. In the midst of terror, as they are taken to prison, they say:

Cordelia: “We are not the first
Who, with the best meaning, have incurred the worst.
For thee, oppressèd King, am I cast down;
Myself could else out-frown false Fortune’s frown.
...”

Lear: “. . . Come, let’s away to prison.
We two alone will sing like birds i’ the cage.
When thou dost ask me blessing, I’ll kneel down,
And ask of thee forgiveness. So we’ll live,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
Talk of court news; and we’ll talk with them too,
Who loses and who wins; who’s in, who’s out;
And take upon’s the mystery of things,
As if we were God’s spies; and we’ll wear out,
In a walled prison, packs and sects of great ones,
That ebb and flow by the moon.”⁹¹

Their dialogue is an achievement signaling that they have abandoned Fate (and thus their geniuses). They are now wonder’s captives. The world

stands over against them as something to wonder at. This is an achievement against odds, for war is a captivation that usually *destroys* wonder as well as its participants. (We see that destruction in *Macbeth*: Near the conclusion of that play, his imagination dies before he does.)⁹² By the end of the play, Cordelia is no longer pure empathy and Lear is no longer mesmerized by his oracle and its chorus.

Despite this dialect of wonders, the other logic, that of Fate, develops. Let us look at another way in which Fate and Wonder work in the play.

The Language of Fate (Oracle) vs. the Language of Wonder
(Witty Contradiction) in The Fool and Lear's Madness

The character who carries the language of wonder consistently through the play is the Fool. He helps Lear develop away from his genius toward consciousness. In the following passage, the Fool plays on Lear's narcissistic identification of quality and quantity. The Fool tries to show Lear how the language of "nothing" can make him "richer":

Mark it, nuncle:
Have more than thou showest,
Speak less than thou knowest,
Lend less than thou owest,
Learn more than thou trowest,
Set less than thou throwest,
Leave thy drink and thy whore,
And keep in-a-door,
And thou shalt have more,
Than two tens to a score.⁹³

To this Kent replies: "This is nothing, fool." The Fool replies by making Lear wonder at Lear's earlier declaration to Cordelia that "Nothing will come of nothing."⁹⁴ That is, the Fool says to Lear: "Can you make no use of nothing [of my song], nuncle?" To which Lear replies: "Why, no, boy; nothing can be made out of nothing." The Fool then says to Kent: "Prithee, tell him, so much the rent of his land comes to. He will not believe a fool."⁹⁵ So far, Lear will not hear—will not be enriched by the wisdom—of the Fool's nothingnesses.

But Lear's language progressively becomes like the Fool's. The turning point occurs just before the heath, right after Lear's argument with Goneril and Regan about the number of attendants they will allow him. At the end of that torturous debate over quantity, Lear finally grasps the fallacy in his way of pairing love with quantity. To Regan's tormenting question "why [do you even need] one [man]?" He hollers "O, reason not the need! Our basest beggars / Are in the poorest things superfluous."⁹⁶ At this point, Lear's heart cracks

and he begins speaking the language of contradiction. He heads to the heath. There, Lear becomes a contradiction: When Kent calls out “Who’s there?” the Fool replies ambiguously “Marry, here’s grace and a cod-piece; that’s a wise man and a fool.”⁹⁷ Following a long rant, mad Lear, echoing both Cordelia and the Fool, contradicts his oracular self: “I will be the pattern of patience; I will say nothing.”⁹⁸

After the scene on the heath, Lear speaks through contradiction. For example, to blind Gloucester Lear says:

“O, ho, are you there with me? No eyes in your head, nor no money in your purse? Your eyes are in a heavy case, your purse in a light. Yet you see how this world goes.”

Gloucester: “I see it feelingly.”

Lear: “What, art mad? A man may see how this world goes with no eyes. Look with thine ears. See how yond justice rails upon yond simple thief. Hark, in thine ear. Change places and, handy-dandy, which is the justice, which is the thief? Thou hast seen a farmer’s dog bark at a beggar?”

Gloucester: “Aye, sir.”

Lear: “And the creature run from the cur? There thou mightst behold the grey image of authority: a dog’s obeyed in office.
Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand!
Why dost thou lash that whore? Strip thine own back;
Thou hotly lusts to use her in that kind
For which thou whipp’st her. The usurer hangs the cozener.
Through tattered clothes small vices do appear;
Robes and furred gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold,
And the strong lance of justice hurless breaks;
Arm it in rags, a pigmy’s straw does pierce it.
None does offence, none, I say, none; I’ll able ’em’
Take that of me, my friend, who have the power
To seal the accuser’s lips. Get thee glass eyes;
And, like a scurvy politician, seem
To see the things thou does not. . . .”
Edgar: “O, matter and impertinency mixed!
Reason in madness!”
Lear: “If thou wilt weep my fortunes, take my eyes.

I know thee well enough; thy name is Gloucester:
Thou must be patient. . . .⁹⁹

In my Hegelian reading, Lear, in his madness, has passed from being dominated by his feeling soul's immediacy to the self-feeling soul's insanity. Lear's madness is therefore an advance: It is purgative and strangely insightful. He speaks of how contradictory the world appears (especially with regard to justice). He now knows that he is in a world of geniuses: "When we are born, we cry that we are come / To this great stage of fools."¹⁰⁰ Talking nonsense through contradictions is the only way to talk sense in a world of geniuses. The geniuses, however, cannot tolerate contradiction: they cannot "hear" the truth through contradictions. Their "eyes" fixate on one side. And for them, Lear is simply mad.

Hegel's discussion in the second section of the Feeling Soul in the *Encyclopedia Anthropology* also concerns madness. There, he writes that, in madness, a higher level of mind sinks into the level of genius. But in Lear's case, madness is the language of a man attempting to exit the dream-world of geniuses. Lear's madness is like Hamlet's in this respect: The social world around him is a bad dream constituted by people's oracular authority; when someone like Hamlet or the Fool or Poor Tom or Lear himself pokes through to the waking world, their language is dissonant with that dream world. They speak in witty contradictions.

The language of contradictions is the language of wonder. It is the language of the urge to overcome the dreamscape in which the contradictions that constitute the social fabric are not recognized. This is why the theater players are so interesting to Hamlet: they have conscious control of the language of society and can turn that language on and off at will. According to Hegel, the ability to put on and take off a mask at will is the hallmark of comedy.¹⁰¹ This is why the Fool's and Lear's and Poor Tom's (and Hamlet's) language is funny, even when deadly serious.

Kent's Urging of Lear to Overcome Contradiction

Kent and the Fool are the only characters who start out and remain outside of the illusory world of the geniuses. They both embrace contradiction in order to survive: The Fool is wise but must speak in confusing language; Kent is honest but must appear to be someone other than he is. Kent also tries to bring Lear to his senses (literally, he tries to make Lear's feeling soul one that consciously feels rather than one that vibrates narcissistically.) Here is an example of Kent's effort.

Early in the play, the banished, disguised Kent encounters Lear. Lear says: "Dost thou know me, fellow?" Kent replies: "No, sir; but you have that in your

countenance which I would fain call master.”¹⁰² Hegel cites this passage as an example of the magical effect one person can have on another: “Among adults, a superior mind exercises a magical power over weaker minds; thus, for example, Lear over Kent, who felt himself irresistibly drawn to the unhappy monarch because the king seemed to him to have something in his countenance which he, as he puts it, “would fain call master.””¹⁰³

I disagree with Hegel here. I think that Kent is trying to get Lear to feel Lear’s own authority rather than to construct it from the choruses that chime in with his genius. Kent sees something in Lear’s countenance and in saying so invites Lear to look to himself to see it. Far from succumbing to magical influence from Lear, Kent is helping Lear *out* of Lear’s magical thinking. Kent’s words draw Lear away from the oracular toward feeling his body (rather than the words of others) as the site of authority. Kent is helping Lear toward “seeing the world feelingly,” that is, toward a wonder that leads to proper self-knowledge. Kent is pointing Lear toward true mastery (his consciousness of the authority that is embodied in him).

Kent tries to make Lear wonder but fails because Kent’s language is too easily appropriable by Lear’s narcissism: To Lear, it is just more chorus. Hegel makes the mistake of interpreting Kent’s words the way Lear hears them.

Fate and Wonder: Two Logics of Contradiction

The difference between violent contradiction and sublation of contradiction lies in a character’s level of cognitive development. The check that inaugurates the urge to overcome contradiction (rather than violent reaction against it) has to be a result of otherness that invites rather than destroys. Cordelia invites, her sisters destroy. Similarly, Lear invites Cordelia insofar as he refers to her as the one he had loved most of all. That underlying love is what makes Lear wonder at himself and not just at Cordelia.

Contradiction from other geniuses is not enough to initiate wonder. Nor is mere vibration sufficient. Love is not just vibration: It seeks to know the other. And without love, self-knowledge is self-destruction.

The soul longs to vibrate in complete unity with its other. But the soul cannot have that unity because it is always already different from its genius. Contradiction at this level makes the soul (i.e., the genius) seek to erase difference in order to return to its vibrations. But that vibration is particular vibration, not unity with being. By contrast, *consciousness*’ urge to overcome contradiction shares in *being* because the urge is becoming. A particular vibration is a destiny; sublation is eternity.

We can articulate this in terms of the contradictory relationship of quality and quantity. At the level of genius, the contradiction is catastrophic: for it is equally true that quality *is* quantity *and* that quality *cannot be* quantity. The

genius who holds to one side of this contradiction cannot admit to the truth of the other side. For that genius, the destruction of the other side is the only solution. But at the level of consciousness, this contradiction is recognized as a real one and the effort is made to overcome it.

The logic of Fate is contradiction at the level of genius. It is a bad dream in which all the players act as if they are sleepwalking. For example, in Act 1 Scene 4, when Lear arrives at Goneril's castle, he is all of a sudden treated rudely by the steward.¹⁰⁴ Lear reacts angrily and exclaims in amazement "Ho? I think the world's asleep."¹⁰⁵ As the play progresses, there are more and more direct affronts against Lear's genius by the other (dreaming) geniuses. We noted above that this culminates in the absurd discussion of the number of men he is allowed to keep.

The logic of wonder, on the other hand, is driven by the urge to overcome contradiction by sublating it. We have traced that development in Cordelia and Lear. It culminates in a viewpoint from which they can dispassionately discuss the measure of things.

Let us look at quality vs. quantity in terms of subject vs. object. In Hegel's *Aesthetics*, the contradiction is spelled out as one between subject and substance. More specifically, it is a contradiction between our subjective apprehension and our objective condition.¹⁰⁶ We can distill this down further, to a contradiction between ourselves as knowers and ourselves as bodies.

Feeling souls try to negate the contradiction that other bodied selves present to their genius. The genius' arena of contradiction is that of bodies and organs (by extension, people as functions of destiny).

By contrast, consciousness is the urge to overcome the contradictions of embodied subjectivity, and contradictions of social embodiment. Its effort and arena is incipient Spirit.

The tragedy of the play *Lear* is that the logic of Fate organizes against the bodies even as the logic of Wonder educates their minds.

Blindness and Insight

In tragedy, the moment of overcoming contradiction is often accompanied by the destruction of organs. The removal of eyes is made the symbol of a character's transition from subconscious destiny to self-recognition. Real eyes are replaced by what Aristotle calls "prudence, that eye of the soul."¹⁰⁷

In *Lear*, the character who symbolizes this is Gloucester. He goes from having the sight of genius to the insight of consciousness, from seeing falsely to "seeing the world feelingly." He loses his eyes and, at that very moment, it is revealed to him that he had seen things all wrong.

Gloucester's insight at that point is not just that Edmund is bad and Edgar is good. It is that Gloucester's earlier way of seeing was faulty: "I stumbled

when I saw."¹⁰⁸ When he had sight, he did not realize that it was an obvious contradiction that the son whom he loved hated and plotted against his life. Nor did he try to move beyond this contradiction. Gloucester was led by the genius of Edmund and followed the logic of geniuses, chasing out Edgar. Blinded, Gloucester comes to "see the world feelingly."¹⁰⁹

In this context, seeing the world feelingly is better than sight. On the one hand, this is just a metaphor for insight as opposed to seeing falsely. On the other, the "feeling" quality has to do with the urge to overcome contradiction. The danger of sight is that it can obscure the urge for philosophy. The danger of mere feeling is that the urge has nothing to see.

Gloucester's blinding foreshadows and symbolizes the tragic development of the play as a whole. It illustrates how fate and wonder unite tragically: Insight is gained at the cost of the organs of sight; the beginning of philosophy is arrived at, at the cost of the bodies that would know. The entire play, from Lear's encounter with Cordelia forward, is an expanded moment of tragic self-recognition.¹¹⁰

Lear also starts out seeing falsely, and like Oedipus, when he truly comprehends how genius works, he withdraws from the sighted world. He is swallowed up in what the geniuses around him take to be a mad view of the world.

But Lear's dislocation of his genius does not undo the powers of destruction unleashed by his earlier oracle. Hegel's insight about the nature of speculative knowledge is that "the Owl of Minerva flies at dusk."¹¹¹ *Lear* dramatizes how this truth can be *tragic*.

There is some (hellish) justification for what happens to Gloucester. But of tragedy in general we must ask: Why can we not make the movement to seeing properly without destruction? Why, for example, does Oedipus take vengeance upon the eyes as though his genius, at its own demise, vengefully shouts "ok, but with me goes the possibility of sight!"? Is it consciousness that attacks the organs, mistaking them for the evil geniuses that led to consciousness' horrible condition? If that is the case, why does consciousness, at the moment of self-recognition, collapse back into the genius' logic that one should attack the organ which contradicts?

Why does the beginning of philosophy so often sabotage the body? How can the urge to know agency and the urge to purge agency coincide? What paradox is this at the beginning of philosophy?

We see here why Schmitz is right: In order to avoid tragedy at the birth of consciousness, philosophy must recover a wonder that is also a metaphysics of things. A pure metaphysics of *subjectivity* attacks bodies. It does because, in their very usefulness, bodies contradict the authority of subjectivity. This is Hegel's point about the Enlightenment—pure insight leads to the Terror of the French Revolution.¹¹² As Schmitz points out, we need to wonder at things and bodies, not just at our own subjectivity.

To avoid being tragedy, the beginning of philosophy must equally be the recovery of subjectivity and of being. With regard to being, philosophy must recover the luminous and original potential of the organs of sight; it must recover organs that are indifferent to the destinations to which the subject makes them look. It is to recover, as Kent says, "The true blank of thine eye."¹¹³

Conclusion: Tragedy and Recovery

On the one hand, the tragedy of *King Lear* is personal, "modern," due to the pathos of Lear's and Cordelia's geniuses. At this level, the tragedy purges us of the particular failures of those kinds of geniuses: Too much unconscious egoism, just like too raw an empathy, leads to trouble. On the other hand, the *Tragedy of King Lear* is something bigger than Lear or Cordelia. It is the clash of the universal forces of Fate (destiny) and Wonder (philosophy).¹¹⁴ *This* is the reason why the end of the play is so desolate.

The play is tragic because we feel that the logic of *Wonder*, not the logic of Fate, ought to win. The logics of Lear's and Cordelia's geniuses were overcome: They had moved beyond the language of their "inner oracles." These predestined souls had begun to be philosophically self-determinate. The tragedy is that they did so only when their destiny had unraveled too far: The very moment that Cordelia and Lear speak the language of an emerging, properly political, ethically sensitive order, their geniuses' political landscape destroys them.

If we do not react with the indifference of geniuses in the face of the destruction of other geniuses, it is because we love what Lear and Cordelia have come to represent to us over the course of the play. That is the check that moves us. We feel the urge(ncy) to move beyond genius and destiny to conscious ethical judgment. The play shows what is at stake: if we do not begin philosophy, we remain in a hellish dreamscape of geniuses.

This tragedy of wonder is therefore, traumatically, our recovery of wonder. Thanks to Hegel, we know that this is just the beginning. Thanks to Schmitz, we know why we must love our eyes and the things we see, as our insight develops.

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Part II

Ethical Life and the History Plays

The Development of Negative Infinite Judgment and the Limits of the Sovereign Self

Introduction to Part II

In Part I, we analyzed basic elements in Shakespearean comic and tragic drama and in Hegel's philosophy. We did this within the general framework of trying to understand various characters' moral imaginations in terms of their ability or failure to move beyond contradictions. We ended with the notion of wonder at what that urge is, and with the recognition that wonder is just the beginning. Now we need to see how this urge develops in society.

Part II investigates moral imagination in relation to Shakespeare's History plays and to what Hegel calls Ethical Life.¹ Here, we are concerned with a wider arena of (princely) power and politics. We investigate whether and how wonder develops into justice. We do this by tracing the development of sovereign self-consciousness from Richard II, through Falstaff and Hal under Henry IV, to Hal as Henry V.²

Of Shakespeare's History plays, we are primarily (though not exclusively) concerned with Shakespeare's *Richard II*, *Henry IV* parts one and two, and *Henry V*. Our phenomenological insights about these princely transitions come from developments in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*—from the chapter on Reason through several sections of the chapter on Spirit. I also draw heavily on Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, with occasional references to the *Encyclopedia Logic*.

Summary of the Three Sections of Part II

Section 1: Sovereign Alienation and the Development of Wit (Chapters 5 and 6)

In the first chapter of Part II (Chapter 5), we look at how Richard II's undeveloped form of the "I" that is a "we" (as what Hegel calls "Active Reason") is necessarily self-alienated and unjust. In Chapter 6, we move from Sovereign Reason to Spirit in order to revisit alienation. In that chapter, I introduce Hegel's notion of "Negative Infinite Judgments" in terms of crimes of theft (against possession) and crimes of wit (against language). Wit is a form of Spirit: It is a self-conscious "I" that is "we." But wit is a product and symptom of cultural alienation. The *development* of wit is the cure for that alienation. In the character of Falstaff, we see how wit falls short of justice but also how it is what must be developed if wonder is to develop into justice.

Section 2: Sovereign Deceit and the Rejection of Wit (Chapters 7, 8, and 9)

In the next three chapters (7 through 9), I analyze the character of Hal as Henry V.

The overarching argument is that Henry V's rejection of wit leads negative infinite judgment and the sovereign self to self-deceit. According to Hegel, self-deceit is the highest form of hypocrisy and the high-water mark of evil. Henry V's route is not how we arrive at justice.

I begin by looking at Henry V's apparent virtue (Chapter 7). I then look at Hegel's theory of evil with a particular focus on Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* (Chapter 8). In that chapter, we see that for Hegel, evil, as one of three major forms of negative infinite judgment, is in fact a necessary moment in the development of the State (alongside crime and war). I explain how for Hegel, overcoming crime pushes Abstract Right to become Morality, and how overcoming evil pushes society beyond Morality to Ethical Society.³ From this analysis, I show the dialectical necessity and limits of Falstaff's crimes and, more importantly, of Henry V's evil moral posturing. In Chapter 9, I compare Henry V to Richard III, Macbeth, and Hamlet. This comparison reveals the details of how sovereign conscience can slip into evil, and it shows the nature of Henry V's self-deceit. Despite his sovereign successes, we see why Henry V's "moral" evil is a profound form of alienation that does not produce a just ethical order.

Section 3: Sovereign Wit and the End of Alienation (Chapter 10)

To point beyond the tragedies of ethical life, in the conclusion of Part II (Chapter 10), I contrast two kinds of justice. That is, I contrast princely policy

and monarchic pardon. In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel calls monarchic pardon “the majesty of mind.” This is the princely form of what in society in general is forgiveness. According to Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*, forgiveness is the gateway to the highest form of social intercourse. By means of it, Spirit arrives at Absolute Knowing (the culmination of Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*). Forgiveness makes it possible for the “I” that is a “we” to become reconciled with the internal contradictions that arise because of the negative infinite judgment of its members.

Forgiveness is the moment of the return of a more advanced form of wit. That is, through the apparent caprice and “wit” involved in forgiving others for their crimes, negative infinite judgments are inverted into the majesty of mind. Monarchic pardon is the culmination of the urge of sovereign self to overcome its contradictions. Forgiveness in general is the end of Spirit’s self-alienation and the ground of absolute justice. Thus monarchic pardon is the segue to our final Part III, which concerns the absolute standpoint of the Romance plays in relation to Absolute Knowing.

This concludes my summary of Part II. To conclude this Introduction to Part II, let me make a few points about the History plays and about Hegel’s view of them.

Shakespeare’s History Plays

Our focus is on *Richard II*, *Henry IV I and II*, and *Henry V*. These plays constitute a connected series. Shakespeare wrote them in sequence between 1595 and 1599. The princely figures, which in real history follow from Henry V (i.e., Henry VI and Richard III), are also the titles of dramatic plays by Shakespeare. But these were written *earlier* than the first series mentioned (*Richard II* to *Henry V*) and are not part of their plot development. (The three *Henry VI* plays were written between 1588–1591 and *Richard III* was written in 1592.)

The sequence of History plays that were written earlier (beginning with *The First Part of Henry the Sixth*, *The First Part of the Contention of the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster* (2 *Henry VI*), and *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York and the Good King Henry the Sixth* (3 *Henry VI*)), are all of one general theme: the struggles during the war of the Roses. *Richard III* is considered by most to be part of that connected series, not least because it picks up directly on the *Richard III*’s final soliloquy in the last of the *Henry VI* plays.

The remaining History plays are *The Life and Death of King John*, written in 1594–96 (it is historically the earliest monarch of the lot) and *All Is True* (*Henry VIII*) written in 1612–13. *Henry VIII* is, historically, the last of the monarchs. These plays are interesting in their own right but do not form any important part of a sequence with the other plays.⁴

Why We Are Concerned with Only One Sequence within the History Plays

For the most part, I have limited my discussion of the History plays to the sequence running from *Richard II* to *Henry V*. The exceptions are a discussion of Richard III's evil character in my Chapter 9 and of Henry VIII in my Chapter 10. This choice of sequence is due to the kinds of comparisons I wish to make with Hegel's theories. These comparisons concern the development of self-consciousness through various forms of alienation and self-certainty in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, as well as Hegel's definitions of evil, crime, and virtue in the *Philosophy of Right*.

The argument about the plays and that runs through Part II is the following. There is a development of a Hegelian sort in the transition of the crown from Richard II through to Bolingbroke and then to Hal as Henry V. The character of Falstaff and his wit are central to the final transition of power and insight from Bolingbroke to Hal. Hegel's discussion of wit in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* helps us to see why. In the psychological and political developments from *Richard II* to *Henry V*, the tension between the (presumed) negative infinite judgment of a prince and the alienation (and contingencies) of wit, is given dramatic and philosophical shape.

Hegel on the History Plays

Hegel does not have much to say in general about Shakespeare's History plays as a genre. In his *Lectures on Aesthetics*, he mentions them in only two places.⁵ In the first, Hegel asserts that the primacy of the "individual in his decision and achievement"⁶ (which Hegel thinks is central to good drama) is at risk in Shakespeare's History plays. This is because the History plays have "as chief ingredient, purely external historical matter."⁷ In this respect, Shakespeare's historical dramas are "further away from the ideal mode of representation." Nonetheless, Hegel qualifies that "even here the situations and actions are borne and promoted by the harsh independence and self-will of the characters." However, according to Hegel, the characters in the History plays have "only a mostly *formal* self-reliance." Hegel contrasts this with the better structure of the hero's character in the tragedies. "[I]n the independence of the heroic characters what must be an essential keynote is the *content* too which they have made it their aim to actualize."⁸

Hegel's second point about the History plays occurs in the context of discussing "the representation of historical external actuality." Hegel asserts that it "must remain as subordinate as possible and a mere frame. . . . Here it does not matter at all if pedants deplore the inaccuracy of manners, feelings, level of culture."⁹ Hegel goes on to discuss Shakespeare's historical plays in this light:

In Shakespeare's historical pieces, e.g., there is plenty which remains strange to us and can be of little interest. In reading them we are satisfied indeed, but not in the theatre. Critics and connoisseurs think of course that such historical splendour should be represented on their own account, and then they vituperate about the bad and corrupt taste of the public if it makes known its boredom with such things; but the work of art and its immediate enjoyment is not for connoisseurs and pedants but for the public, and the critics need not ride the high horse.¹⁰

Hegel is not asserting that the History plays should be read rather than watched. He is claiming that historical details are the sort of thing that we enjoy to read, but they have no place on the stage. According to Hegel, it is fine that Shakespeare's History plays do not stick to the details of the time in which they are set.

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Section 1

*Sovereign Alienation and the
Development of Wit*

(Chapters 5 and 6)

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Chapter 5

Richard II's Mirror and the Alienation of the Universal Will (of the "I" that Is a "We")¹

Hegel on Richard II

Hegel mentions Richard II only twice in his *Aesthetics*. Both times occur in "Symbolism of the Comparative Art Form" in a section entitled "Metaphor, Image, Simile."

The first instance occurs in a rare case of Hegel criticizing Shakespeare; the second occurs in Hegel's discussion of the use of simile by characters who are criminals or who fall on bad times (a topic addressed in my Introduction).

The first passage occurs in Hegel's discussion of "Metaphor." Hegel writes that "even Shakespeare is not entirely free from" using bad metaphors. What Hegel is complaining about in particular are uses of natural objects that "degenerate into preciousness, into far-fetched or playful conceits, if what is absolutely lifeless appears notwithstanding as personified and such spiritual activities are ascribed to it in all seriousness."² Hegel criticizes the Italians in particular for letting "themselves go in the like hocus-pocus."³

Hegel also points to the bad use of natural objects in Richard II's words as he departs from his queen:

For why, the senseless brands will sympathize
The heavy accent of thy moving tongue,
And in compassion weep the fire out;
And some will mourn in ashes, some coal-black,
For the deposing of a rightful King.⁴

On the other hand, in Hegel's second mention of Richard II, he praises Richard II's use of simile. We recall from our discussion in the Introduction that Hegel offers three reasons for simile, the third being the effect of distancing the individual from his or her immersion in badness: "[I]n the *practical* sphere of action similes have the aim of showing that the individual has not merely immersed himself directly in his specific situation, feeling, or passion, but that as a high and noble being he is superior to them and can cut himself from them."⁵ Among his many examples from Shakespeare, Hegel refers to Richard II:

[W]hen Richard II has to atone for the youthful frivolity of his days of happiness, it is especially *he* who has a heart that however much it secludes itself in its grief, yet retains the force to set it steadily before itself in new comparisons. And this is precisely the touching and childlike aspect in Richard's grief, that he constantly expresses it to himself objectively in felicitous images and retains his suffering all the more profoundly in the play of this self-expression. When Henry demands the crown from him, e.g., he replies [RII, Act IV scene i]:

Here, cousin, seize the crown; . . .
 On this side my hand, and on that side yours.
 Now is this golden crown like a deep well
 That owes two buckets, filling one another,
 The emptier ever dancing in the air,
 The other down, unseen and full of water:
 That bucket down and full of tears am I,
 Drinking my griefs, whilst you mount up on high.⁶

We might add that Richard II, in the early stages of the play, fits Fichte's description of the dogmatist. Instead of external objects in general, it is the crown and royal objects that define Richard. Fichte writes:

They have only that dispersed self-consciousness which attaches to objects, and has to be gleaned from their multiplicity. Their image is reflected back at them only by things, as by a mirror; if these were taken from them, their self would be lost as well; for the sake of their self they cannot give up the belief in the independence of things, for they themselves exist only if things do [in Richard's case, only if the crown and royal garbs do—JB]. Everything they are, they have really become through the external world. Whoever is in fact a product of things, will never see himself as anything else; and he will be right so long as he speaks only of himself and of others like him. The principle of the dogmatists is belief in things for the

sake of the self: indirect belief, therefore, in their own scattered self sustained only by objects.⁷

Ultimately, however, we must agree with Northrop Frye: Despite Bolingbroke's greater social success it is Richard II who is the hero of the play. Frye writes:

It is the mastery of rhetorical language that makes a figure in a play heroic. . . . In the clash between him and Bolingbroke near the end of the play, Bolingbroke seems to be winning everything, the crown, the title, the mastery of the kingdom, and yet Richard continues to put on his own show, and that is the one thing that Bolingbroke cannot steal. After we leave the theatre, it is Richard II, with his gazing into a mirror and his wonderful speech in prison that we remember: he is still the hero of the play.⁸

Hegel is right too. Ultimately, Richard's use of simile shows that he has risen above his earlier dogmatic grip on the crown. My task now is to show the phenomenology behind Richard's development.

Setting the Scene: *De Jure* Power and Active Reason

The Plot of *Richard II*

Richard II is one of Shakespeare's early plays, written in the mid-1590s. The story in a nutshell is about the inept, spendthrift, and carousing King Richard's gradual loss of power to the Machiavellian Bolingbroke. Bolingbroke ultimately deposes Richard, is crowned Henry IV, and has Richard murdered. The play begins with a standoff between Bolingbroke and Mowbray over which one of them is a traitor to Richard; after much throwing down of the gauntlet and fine speech, the two are to face off in a duel. But at the last minute before the duel, Richard II intercedes. He decides to banish them both.

Shortly afterward, Bolingbroke's dying father, John of Gaunt, chastises Richard's love of pleasures and flattery rather than of ruling, and accuses him of "leasing out England like a tenement or pelting farm."⁹ Once John of Gaunt is dead, Richard seizes all of his property for himself and his war against Ireland. Richard leaves for the war in Ireland, and Bolingbroke, already on his way back to challenge the throne, learns of his disenfranchisement and seizes on it to rally the nobles and the people against Richard.

Richard returns from Ireland a day too late: The Welsh forces that would have defended him against Bolingbroke have assumed Richard dead and have fled or joined Bolingbroke. Richard's supporters have been murdered or have abandoned him in favor of the insurgent.

While the obvious reversal in the play is that of power from Richard to Bolingbroke, the other major reversal is in our sympathy: Richard becomes the underdog, and his psychological trials become metaphysically absorbing. As he loses power, he becomes introverted. As Frye points out, "that is a dangerous thing for a ruler to be who expects to go on being a ruler."¹⁰ Richard's language becomes poetic and metaphorical. We are treated to lyrical soliloquies, sometimes self-pitying, sometimes philosophical. *Richard II* indeed seems "an overture to *Hamlet*."¹¹

Nonetheless, in the strange farewell scene with his wife, we are invited to feel the emotional bond between Richard and her, one suggesting that his psyche does involve "others" in ways that were not evident in the first part of the play.

Both the historical accounts from which this play is derived, and the majority of the literary criticism about the play up until around 1811, depict Richard as deserving of his fate. But the German Romantic critic and Shakespearean translator August Wilhelm Schlegel argued that "In Richard the Second, Shakespeare exhibits a noble kingly nature, at first obscured by levity and the errors of an unbridled youth, and afterwards purified by misfortune, and rendered by it more highly and splendidly illustrious."¹² The editors of *Shakespearean Criticism* assert that "The issue of whether Richard's character is static or dynamic has sharply divided critics ever since [Schlegel's remark]."¹³

But phenomenologists like myself (rather than historians or literary critics) have a different orientation to the play. I am concerned with the kind of alienation Richard experiences. Even though Hegel does not mention Richard II in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, we can turn to that book to find the kind of phenomenological dialectic that most closely matches Richard's alienation. We find this in Hegel's account of the inversions experienced by what Hegel calls "Active Reason."

Hegel's Phenomenological Account of Active Reason¹⁴

Let me briefly demarcate the moments of Active Reason. These will become clearer later in the chapter when we discuss them in connection with Richard II.

Consciousness begins with a realization that reality is an expression of its own wilful, rational self-actualization. This is in fact not the whole truth. As we have seen above, the key is to grasp the true as both substance and subject.¹⁵ Consciousness' attempt to realize the unity of its thought and being through self-actualization therefore encounters opposition. As a result, it develops through several dialectically generated forms of self-actualization. These are as follows. Consciousness starts with pleasure, but runs headlong into Necessity (social and cultural tradition). In order to sustain its internal

integrity, it transforms itself into the Law of the Heart. But it discovers that if everyone does this, as the Law of the Heart dictates that they must, then the social fabric appears to be a frenzy of self-conceit. The individual is therefore forced to incorporate the universal into its heart and it thereby gives birth to universal virtue—everyone acts for the benefit of the whole. Virtue's codependent opposite is the apparently disinterested utilitarian way of the world. That view has for its inner truth the idea that each individual is acting according to what he or she thinks is best.

Active Reason eventually realizes that it cannot achieve the desired unity of reason and reality and of thought and being through the activity of the single individual will. Rather, the only way it can properly discover itself in the world is by reflecting upon itself and acting as part of Ethical Substance. In other words, it realizes that rational self-actualization cannot occur outside of the ethical community.

In this shift from Reason to Spirit, consciousness' first step is to put its laws—laws which simply “are,” first. This is the beginning of the long dialectical evolution of Spirit in Chapter 6 of the *Phenomenology*.

Comparing Shakespeare's *Richard II* with Hegel's “Drama” of Reason

Both the character of Richard II and Hegel's Active Reason concern the individual who takes himself to speak for the world, and yet the failure of that individual to unify thought and being by means of his individual will.

The dialectic of Active Reason which most closely parallels the play lies in the first two of the three sections that make up “The Actualization of Rational Self-Consciousness Through its Own Activity.” These are “Pleasure and Necessity,” and “The Law of the Heart and the Frenzy of Self-Conceit.” There is also something of the third section “Virtue and the Way of the World” at work.¹⁶

Before I discuss these, let me first address important ways in which my comparison of Richard II's character development with the development of Active Reason might fail.

Arguments Against the Comparison

The play was written in a time before the kind of consciousness of which Hegel writes comes on the historical stage (i.e., modernity). Active Reason presumes the rational standpoint of the modern era: “it is certain that it is itself reality, or that everything actual for it is none other than itself; its thinking is itself directly actuality, and thus its relationship to the latter is that of idealism.”¹⁷ Unlike the rational individual of Active Reason, King Richard II's authority is God-given. His freedom, while absolute, is nested in the rules and recognition structures of a monarchic polity.

Second, Hegel's chapter on Reason concerns the time of modern civil society. The historical period played out in *Richard II* does not. Nor is Shakespeare's time modern.

Third, I argue that, at the time of his murder, Richard has developed to the final phenomenological stage of Reason. But (just as we saw in Hamlet) Richard's death marks the end of any further development of his consciousness. So his achievement is in the end not a dialectical continuation.

Finally, Henry Harris has compiled a long list of historical and literary characters that others have claimed match up with the consciousness of Active Reason and which Harris feels fall short. To name only a few, the consciousness of the "Law of the Heart" is not, according to Harris, Jacobi, or Schleiermacher, because there is no religious basis to the experience of consciousness here; nor is it a Hobbesian agent because such a one lacks the moment of loving another individual; nor is it even properly Fichte because we haven't reached the level of conscience yet; nor is the consciousness of Virtue exemplified by Don Quixote.¹⁸ Socrates, Romeo and Juliet, Frederick the Great, and other characters also get discussed by Harris. Since Richard II bears little outward resemblance to the cast of characters Harris does admit as exemplars, namely Faust, Gretchen, the Savoyard Vicar, and Karl Moor, I am at risk of adding Richard II to the list of failed illustrations. The most serious problem is that unlike Faust, Richard is not a rational agent who is out to *make* his world. He expects it to comply with his will.

Why We Can Compare Richard II and Active Reason

Our license to compare lies in the following. First, Richard II's experience of his *de jure* power and of the dissolution of his practical (self-)idealism is conceptually similar to the phenomenological experience of rational, individual freedom and the dissolution of its practical (self-)idealism. Like Reason, Richard's royal "we" has the (naïve) certainty that it is all reality, (at least social reality). In speaking of himself in the plural (. . . "call them to our presence"¹⁹), Richard is the implicit form of Spirit in the same way that Reason, which takes itself as the category of all reality, is the implicit form of Spirit.

Second, like Reason at the end of its development in Hegel's chapter, Richard, by means of negation, becomes a unity that is also a genuine plurality. In other words, both Reason and Richard arrive at the doorstep of Spirit.

Third, the play, like the sequence in Active Reason, is based on inversions. It is to these inversions that I now turn. For in showing how they work, we argue the first two points as well.

It should be noted that my comparisons with Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* are largely based on Harris' translation and interpretation of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* in *Hegel's Ladder*.

I look first at the role of mirroring in both works, then at shifts in the metaphors of identity and time in the play. I show how these mirrorings and shifts illustrate the phenomenological moments discussed by Hegel in Chapter 5B.

Inversions

Mirrors in *Richard II*

After Richard has given the crown to Bolingbroke, Richard requests a looking glass in order to see whether his own face has changed as a result of having given up the crown. A brief soliloquy about his self-reflection follows. Then he smashes the glass into fragments, acting out the fragmentation of his identity.

The play, from the first Act 1 onward, has been reflecting into itself. There are constant inversions in words: characters "set the word itself / Against the word."²⁰ Witness, for example, the following exchange: Richard: "What comfort, man? How is't with aged Gaunt?" John of Gaunt: "O, how that name befits my composition! / Old Gaunt indeed, and gaunt in being old."²¹ There are several other word-mirrorings in this exchange. I limit myself to two more: John of Gaunt: "O, had thy grandsire with a prophet's eye / Seen how his son's son would destroy his sons, / From forth thy reach he would have laid thy shame, Deposing thee before thou wert possessed / Which art possessed now to depose thyself [. . .] Landlord of England art thou now, not king / Thy state of law is bondslave to the law."²²

These mirrors are also temporal inversions: Richard's activity reverses time. His version of *de jure* activity is one-sided and so perverts normal succession and thus also identity based on normal succession. For example, once Gaunt is dead and Richard proposes to take his wealth, York objects, saying "Take Hereford's rights away, and take from Time / His charters and his customary rights; / Let not tomorrow then ensue today; Be not thyself, for how art thou a king / But by fair sequence and succession?"²³ As Hegel declares in the *Philosophy of Right*, rights are the existents of freedom;²⁴ rights are the time and space of freedom, its embodiment. Richard's self-actualizing behaviour inverts other people's rights, and thereby his own and others' identity.

The scenes also are often constructed as a mirror reflection. For example, in the opening scene, Mowbray and Bolingbroke mirror each other as they call each other traitors and drop their gauntlets. And the scenes are often mirrored by other scenes, for example, that very scene between Mowbray and Bolingbroke before King Richard is repeated later by two people declaring each other traitors before Bolingbroke as King Henry. It is as though the entire play were looking into a mirror.

There is also the frequent appeal for something to look like itself,²⁵ and questions about whether something or someone still looks like itself (as in Richard's request for the mirror). This is linked to the potential at every turn for hypocrisy. Bolingbroke is the king of that duplicitous gaze. York makes this point about Bolingbroke when he rebukes him (notice how the rebuke uses mirroring words): To Bolingbroke's apparently respectful greeting York replies "Show me thy humble heart, and not thy knee, / Whose duty is deceivable and false." Bolingbroke: "My gracious uncle." York: "tut tut, grace me no grace, nor uncle me no uncle."²⁶

The mirror always has an element of negation in it. This is a point to which we must return later. Indeed, there is much more to be said about mirroring in this play. For now, however, let us look at how mirroring works in the chapter on Reason in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

The Mirrors of Active Reason

The transitions in Active Reason are a series of mirror inversions that develop because of Active Reason's self-reflected activity. The rational will of individual reason that takes itself to be all of reality is a form of self-mirroring that is one-sided. It therefore has the shape of a singular gaze reflecting on a plurality in the mirror, a plurality which appears to it to move in time and space *because* of the individual's will. Until it realizes that its own activity is unified only in the whole temporal and spatial complexity of that other world (i.e., in a community of successions and simultaneities of an interpreting and rights-based community), the individual will has the following pathological reflective experiences. It will alternatively identify itself: with its own absolute gaze; with any of the objects in the mirror (each of which has the gaze within it—this is the Law of the Heart and the Frenzy of Self-Conceit); with itself as nothingness facing an alien world (this is the stoic pivotal moment necessary for realizing the universal character of all moments and thus the transition to virtue); with its own will as the good in the picture (this is Virtue); and with the utilitarian expression of will in the reflected world (this is "the way of the world").

The result is what Harris refers to as a "mirror-fight" (*Spiegelfechtere*).²⁷ Hegel states the basic problem as follows: "Can the principle of selfishness be superseded when the self is the agent of the supersession?"

The provisional answer is that "Virtue is the *faith* that it can."²⁸ Harris clarifies the dynamic at work here.

[Virtue] knows that when truly appreciated the universal Good is not an instrument to be used by the active consciousness as an "other".... Actually, however, this knowledge is what reduces

Virtue's own fight to a fencing practice in front of a mirror. The Knowledge that the Universal is "the purpose" is just as *abstract* as the knowledge that it is an instrument *for use as we please* (cf. paragraph 384). Virtue can only set an example; it can show the world how to live happily. Its victory depends on the world's being able to recognize itself in the mirror.²⁹

That is,

what Virtue's example does is just to make us all aware that there is an unselfish side in our rational commitment to the pursuit of our own interest. First the heart had to be shown that it is governed by a selfish head. Now the selfish head learns that its private happiness has an unselfish side.³⁰

According to Hegel, victory initially goes to the way of the world "because actuality *is* the individuality that virtue sought to supersede."³¹ "The result . . . is that this good-in-itself is cast off like a cloak. The *Weltlauf* [way of the world] is recognized as the actuality, the universal, and the movement of individuality is its agent of conversion from abstraction to actuality."³²

But the way of the world disappears too, for

what Virtue correctly understands is that no one can act simply for herself. . . . The altruism of completely unselfish service *is* mere rhetoric . . . but the real truth that good citizens are performing a public service makes the language of pure self-seeking egoism, the mythology of "economic man," into mere rhetoric likewise. The concepts of the Universal and the Individual with which Virtue began have been exploded. In their places we have real (i.e. "virtuous") individuality.³³

This is the move to the Reason that takes Reason to be "real in and for itself." The mirroring with which we began, has, by virtue of the logic of its own gaze, become *introspective* self-reflection. Let us now trace some of this in the character of Richard II.

Embodied Time: The Clock vs. the Music (of Civil Harmony)

The metaphors that Richard and others use to describe Richard shift in the play as Richard loses power. His dissolving sense of himself gets expressed through increasing identification of himself, on the one hand, with nothing,

and on the other, with a whole variety of objects. Thus in the play, Richard descends from being described as the sun that lights up the sky to being the ass that bears Bolingbroke along. Once Richard's day of power has turned to his introverted night of self-alienation, everyone moves "From Richard's night to Bolingbroke's fair day."³⁴

These inversions of his identity are also conceptualized in terms of time. Instead of being the God's representative in the temporal order, Richard becomes "Bolingbroke's . . . jack of the clock" (that is, "The Manikin who strikes the clock's bell"³⁵). Indeed, in prison, Richard sees himself as having become a clock. The speech in which Richard thus identifies himself deserves close attention. Note as well how the metaphor of musical timekeeping works in it. This soliloquy of Richard's occurs late in the play, when he has been dethroned and is in prison:

Music do I hear.
 Ha, ha; keep time! How sour sweet music is
 When time is broke and no proportion kept.
 So is it in the music of men's lives.
 And here have I the daintiness of ear
 To check time broke in a disordered string;
 But for the concord of my state and time
 Had not an ear to hear my true time broke.
 I wasted time, and now doth time waste me,
 For now hath time made me his numb'ring clock.
 My thoughts are minutes, and with sighs they jar
 Their watches on unto mine eyes, the outward watch
 Whereto my finger, like a dial's point,
 Is pointing still in cleansing them from tears.
 Now, sir, the sounds that tell what hour it is
 Are clamorous groans that strike upon my heart
 Which is the bell. So sighs, and tears, and groans
 Show minutes, hours, and times. But my time
 Runs posting on in Bolingbroke's proud joy,
 While I stand fooling here, his jack of the clock.
 This music mads me. Let it sound no more,
 For though it have help madmen to their wits,
 In me it seems it will make wise men mad.
 [The music ceases]
 Yet blessing on his heart that gives it me,
 for 'tis a sign of love, and love to Richard
 Is a strange brooch in this all-hating world.³⁶

Richard's changing embodiment of time over the course of the play is our link with what Hegel is talking about in the inversions in Active Reason from Pleasure to Necessity, from the Law of the Heart to the Frenzy of Self-Conceit, and from Virtue to the Way of the World. Let us start at the beginning.

Harris identifies the consciousness at the start of Active Reason with Goethe's Faust:

Faust's new life . . . is where our *Gestalt* of active Reason "hurls itself into life." . . . Faust does take his new life "the way a fruit is plucked" as Hegel says to remind us of the apple in Eden. But the fruit of the grape must be *made* into wine. The enjoyment of identity with the Earth-Spirit is itself a product of Reason.³⁷ . . . Hegel takes Love as the primitive shape of practical Reason.³⁸

At the start of the play, Richard, like Faust, is a lover and a pleasure-seeker. In being so, Richard has inverted the identity and worth of his kingdom. He has not opted for his "earth-spirit" by rejecting the "grey in grey" of philosophy,³⁹ as Observing Reason's Faust has; nor has he grasped the pleasures of the earth as a result of Reason's own making. Nonetheless he is starting, as Active Reason does, from a position of absolute, inalienable authority over his kingdom. And he is deriving as much pleasure from it as he can. Like Faust, Richard will have to learn "from actual experience that his own rational self [in his case *de jure* power—JB] is constituted by its relations with others."⁴⁰

To begin with, however, Richard (like Faust) declares his power to be aligned with the "earth-spirit." As he steps off the boat from Ireland he touches the ground and says:

Dear earth, I do salute thee with my hand,
Though rebels wound thee with their horses' hoofs.
[. . .]
Feed not thy sovereigns' foe, my gentle earth,
Nor with thy sweets comfort his ravenous sense;
But let thy spiders that suck up thy venom
And heavy gaited toads lie in their way,
Doing annoyance to the treacherous feet
Which with usurping steps do trample thee.
[. . .]
Throw death upon thy sovereign's enemies.—
Mock not my senseless conjuration, lords.
This earth shall have a feeling, and these stones
Prove armed soldiers, ere her native king
Shall falter under foul rebellion's arms.⁴¹

Necessity shatters Faust's and Gretchen's pleasure. Something similar happens to Richard. The defections, the loss of the Welsh army, the murders of his few supporters, Bolingbroke's power—these shatter Richard's categorical and natural self-certainty. They do because "[t]he real objectivity of Reason has the necessary shape of universal custom or law."⁴² It is Bolingbroke, not Richard, who represents the land's custom and law.

In fact, Bolingbroke is linked with necessity earlier in the play: On his banishment, his father says to him: "Teach thy necessity to reason thus; / There is no virtue like necessity. Think not the King did banish thee, / But thou the King" (note the mirror-reversal of the words).⁴³ Bolingbroke is socially recognized necessity: He is aligned with the people. They identify with him. His goods have been confiscated by the king, and that theft is emblematic of the king's general disregard for the people's sense of possession and their sense of the worth of their function in society. This is not a modern civil society or bourgeois economy. Nonetheless, the role of individuals and property in sustaining the general good cannot be mishandled without penalty.

So like Gretchen, Richard has to face the music. He has failed to live according to the mores of his culture; he has failed to be a proper king. He assumed that his will could be expressed as an inalienable power of lustful self-actualization. In the clock speech above, he admits that he "Had not an ear to hear my true time broke. / I wasted time, and now doth time waste me, / For now hath time made me his numb'ring clock." Richard becomes a mechanical instrument, following the necessary rhythm of someone else's time; he makes time, but not of his own will. Bolingbroke's social spirit has crafted Richard's earth-spirit into a machine for Bolingbroke's temporal order.

The truth, of course, is that Richard's will was never really his own anyway, anymore than Bolingbroke's was his.

The last lines of the clock speech indicate an inversion from Necessity to the Law of the Heart and the Frenzy of Self-Conceit. The law of the heart will not allow necessity to be a merely external universal. Necessity's essence is, after all, the creative energy of individual self-actualization. The community and its mores are formed of individuals who take their beliefs to heart. On this score, Richard gradually shows himself the winner. Despite Richard's earlier social obscenities, we eventually sympathize with him. We never fully identify with Hobbesian Bolingbroke.

Bolingbroke's hypocrisy cannot match Richard's heart. Take, for example, the scene in which Richard and his wife are forced to part. There is emotional depth to that scene. One could even argue that the scene only works because we have already been won over to Richard's inwardness. By contrast, Bolingbroke upholds custom and law, but this is external. And his power-lust keeps him distant. Finally, we feel as Richard does, that Bolingbroke is oppressive and alien.

For the introverting heart of Richard, this experience eventually reaches its nadir: "For the Heart the *world* is a system of universal subjection to alien Lordship."⁴⁴

One side of the Law of the Heart is self-certainty. But the other side of the Law of the Heart is madness. It is the madness of hearing the disharmony of so many individual heart-strings played at once with no apparent unifying melody. Thus Richard says "This music mads me. Let it sound no more, / For though it have help madmen to their wits, / In me it seems it will make wise men mad." This is what Hegel calls the frenzy of Self-Conceit.

Like the law of the heart in the face of the frenzy of self-conceit, Richard's own loving heart, unlike Bolingbroke's unmusical heart, cannot dispense with the humanity at the basis of social formation. Once the music ceases, Richard proclaims: "Yet blessing on his heart that gives it [the music] me, / for 'tis a sign of love, and love to Richard / Is a strange brooch in this all-hating world."

Either we continue to oscillate between the madness and the love, or we have moved to recognition of the virtue of the music within the "way of the world" (this "all-hating world"). Whether Richard has, in this short space of time, moved from the distressing concept of universal selfishness to virtuous unselfishness is not absolutely clear. But there is reason enough to assert that he might have.

First of all, we can look to Richard's identifications and his growing *awareness* of them. Throughout the play, Richard tries to define himself. Among the identities into which he falls is that of Jesus. For the most part, this has to do with his sense of betrayal. He is no doubt also identifying, in himself, a higher order of humanity and a selfless virtue. Over-against this, his royal entourage and the community in general appear to be blindly hypocritical.

But Richard's insight is not really *religious*. Harris makes clear that, in Reason, we are not concerned with religion. Nor is Richard: his identification with Christ is with a certain phenomenon that Christ represents. And that identification is one of many. Nor is it a "final" one: It does not survive Richard's profound dissolution of identity. Richard's process of identifying is metaphysical rather than Christian: His identifications are all "thoughts" which "people his brain." Against this multiplicity, his self is "nothing," the pure negative of his alienated will.

Richard's identifications are moving, rational shapes, one might say "moments." They are not religious confirmations. This makes him more powerful in his love than Bolingbroke. Bolingbroke still holds to the pomp and ceremony of princely power, long after Richard has realized it is nothing. Witness Richard's account of princely power at the start of his loss of power: His speech appears to be a coward's descent into faithless, self-indulgent alienation and self-pity. But by the end of the speech (just as at the end of the play), it is clear that Richard was not misguided. His speech begins as a lyrical extravaganza but it ends with a truth:

Of comfort no man speak.
 Let's talk of graves, of worms and epitaphs
 [. . .]
 Our lands, our lives, and all are Bolingbroke's;
 And nothing can we call our own but death,
 And that small model of the barren earth
 Which serves as paste and cover to our bones.
 [Sitting]
 For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground,
 And tell sad stories of the death of kings—
 [. . .]
 All murdered. For within the hollow crown
 That rounds the mortal temples of a king
 Keeps Death his court; and there the antic sits,
 Scoffing his state and grinning at his pomp,
 Allowing him a breath, a little scene,
 To monarchize, be feared, and kill with looks,
 Infusing him with self and vain conceit,
 As if this flesh which walls about our life
 Were brass impregnable; and humoured thus,
 Comes at the last, and with a little pin
 Bores through his castle wall; and farewell, king.
 Cover your heads, and mock not flesh and blood
 With solemn reverence. Throw away respect,
 Tradition, form, and ceremonious duty,
 For you have but mistook me all this while.
 I live with bread, like you; feel want,
 Taste grief, need friends. Subjected thus,
 How can you say to me I am a king?⁴⁵

The Romantic critic William Hazlitt refers to Richard's capitulation here as "the splenetic effusion of disappointed ambition."⁴⁶ I prefer to regard Richard more philosophically. The death which sits in the crown is rational negation; the "nothing" that rapidly pervades Richard's speeches is the recognition of the self's non-identification with all things, its freedom. But Richard is no stoic either: his poetry *oscillates* between self-indulgence in "I am nothing" and the truth of the dissolution of all identity. It is the recognition of the love in the social music that makes him transcend these opposites. Even if he only grasps this metaphorically, it is enough to suggest that he has discovered why the social sphere must be acknowledged and transformative of his will.

Like Faust at his death, dying Richard ascends and the earth-spirit remains below. Richard refers to himself as a king again: "Exton, thy fierce hand / Hath

with the King's blood stained the King's own land. Mount, mount, my soul; thy seat is up on high, / Whilst my gross flesh sinks downward, here to die."⁴⁷ While this seems to indicate that *de jure* power has in the end won out over all other identities, something more profound has happened in Richard's soul as a result of his alienation. He uses the imperative "Mount, mount, my soul." His will is reconstituted at a higher, more self-reflective level. Having passed through negation, his *de jure* power is, in the end, his own *self-asserted* use of metaphorical identity formation. It is no longer something coming from the outside to give him identity or salvation. He is reason that knows itself to be real in and for itself. His mirrorings have become introspective self-reflections.

On the one hand, it can be argued that he has gained even more than this: He has gained insight into his sovereign self as Spirit, as an "I" that is a "we." For Richard has experienced the one and the many ("Thus play I in one person many people"). And Richard sees the social impact of his spilled blood. He therefore gains not only his will: He also wills his final moment with full recognition of his role in society. Richard has reconstituted his speculative looking glass into a higher form of practical self-certainty, one that reflects the necessary, inverted mirror-effects of Bolingbroke's "way of the world." Harris explains that in the end, "Active Reason does not *change* the Unchangeable; but it recognizes where (and what) it is."⁴⁸

On the other hand, it is hard to know for sure that Richard has thoroughly grasped the mirror as Spirit. In other words, it is not clear that he has grasped that his will cannot exist separately from social substance. Richard dies with his sovereignty on his lips. It is possible that, despite his advances within Reason, he remains a form of Reason: Perhaps he is, finally, the man who embraces the law as it "is" and thus is only an "Individuality that takes itself to be Real in and for Itself." Harris explains that

When the object is recognized as the spiritual substance, all of the forms of subjective consciousness flow back into it. This will be apparent to us as speculative observers; whereas the consciousness that we are observing, comes back simply to the complacent sense that it is the supreme judge by which everything rational is certified as such.⁴⁹

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have traced a development from an alienated royal "we" to a self that is aware to some degree that it is socially constructed (even if the final level of his achievement remains uncertain). Richard's path to this realization has been a working through of the negation inherent in his alienation. His

ontological and epistemological insight into the negative has created a higher form of social self-consciousness in him than his rival's naïve view that negation is power in the individual alone.

Neither Richard II nor Bolingbroke becomes just. Even Richard's urge to overcome contradiction does not develop to that point. But he and Bolingbroke have peopled our theatre of investigation. We must now follow the development of this theatre by looking at more of Shakespeare's History plays. In the remaining chapters of Part II, we will see whether the alienations of these sovereign selves are ever overcome. We will also see what justice is possible within (and on) these various "stages" of Spirit's history.

Chapter 6

Falstaff and the Politics of Wit

Negative Infinite Judgment in a Culture of Alienation¹

Introduction: Wit's Compass

We recall Hegel's remarkable claim about Shakespeare's ability:

... the more Shakespeare proceeds to portray on the infinite breadth of his "world-stage" the extremes of evil and folly, all the more ... does he precisely plunge his figures who dwell on these extremes into their restrictedness; of course he equips them with a wealth of poetry but *he actually gives them spirit and imagination, and, by the picture in which they can contemplate and see themselves objectively like a work of art, he makes them free artists of their own selves.* ...²

The character of Jack Falstaff, in *Henry IV* Part I, appears in his wittiness to be the free artist of more than just himself. For example, his playful soliloquy about honor provides a deep reflection about how the world works. Indeed Falstaff's wit seems to embody what Hegel, in discussing wit, calls a "negative infinite judgement." This needs explaining, but we can prefigure it here with Falstaff's exclamation: "Banish plump Jack, and banish all the world."³

Why (Falstaff's) Wit Matters within Considerations about Moral Imagination

Epistemologically, wit, like imagination, occupies a middle ground. Like jokes and slips of the tongue, wit arises between reason and unreason, between the ego and the unconscious, between normal and irregular uses of language, between acceptable and censurable speech.

Politically, wit occupies ambiguities, it laughs at all seriousness; it sits on the fence between vassals and kings, poking fun at presumed authority on either side. In every field of social thought, wit takes its departure from the murky limits between normally established differences. For example, it revels in the difference between the polite and the impolite, the beautiful and the ugly, the wise and the ignorant, the good and the bad. Indeed, because of Falstaff's wit, Harold Bloom writes that Falstaff rises clear above morality.⁴

There is a third way in which wit and imagination are similar. In Hegel, every dialectical movement has three stages. The second is always negative. Both imagination and wit occur in the second, negative stage in their respective dialectics. Thus, in Hegel's psychology, the imagination is in the second (and thus negative) moment in the dialectical development from intuition to thought. In Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, wit lies within the second moment of a dialectical development that is itself the second moment of a larger dialectical moment. That is, wit is in the middle of the dialectic called "The World of Self-Alienated Spirit" in a section called "Culture and its Realm of Actuality." And that world of self-alienated spirit is the middle moment between "True Spirit: The Ethical Order" and "Spirit that is Certain of Itself. Morality." In short, according to Hegel, wit is the self-conscious play of negation that arises in an alienated culture.

I argue that Falstaff exemplifies wit's recovery from the alienating effects of the social mirror (of the "I" that is a "We"). Falstaff's wit is an advance over Richard II's naive royal "we" and the alienation to which that gave rise. It is also an advance over the final insight Richard II may have had at the end of *Richard II*, namely that the sovereign self is generated or destroyed by social forces. As we shall see in more detail below, Falstaff's wit rises above all earnest declaration about identity and its origins.

But does Falstaff rise above morality, as Harold Bloom claims? I argue below that Hegel's account of wit must lead us to conclude that, while Falstaff's wittiness is the beginning of enlightened social self-consciousness, without further development, it remains self-centered. Nonetheless, wit must be retained as a necessary element of ethics. Key to understanding this is grasping the "crimes" of witty Falstaff as negative infinite judgments.

In what follows, I read Falstaff through Hegel's concept of wit in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. I also argue that Falstaff expresses a form of what Hegel, in the *Philosophy of Right* and *Encyclopedia Logic*, calls "negative infinite judgments."⁵

Hegel's Treatment of Falstaff

Hegel mentions Falstaff only three times in the *Aesthetics*, each time to illustrate a general point about Shakespeare's character development. In the first passage, Hegel writes that:

What the Shakespearean figures carry out, their particular end, has its origin and the root of its force in their own individuality. But in one and the same individuality they preserve at the same time the loftiness which wipes away what they really are, i.e. in their aims, interests, and actions; it aggrandizes them and enhances them above themselves. Thus Shakespeare's vulgar characters, Stephano, Trinculo, Pistol, and the absolute hero of them all, Falstaff, remain sunk in their vulgarity, but at the same time they are shown to be men of intelligence with a genius fit for anything, enabling them to have an entirely free existence, and, in short, to be what great men are. . . .⁶

In the second passage, Hegel is discussing the dissolution of the Romantic art through the comic recapitulation of chivalry and the independent character. First there is the "frivolous joke" method of Ariosto; then there is the "genuinely ironic" spoof in Cervantes' *Don Quixote*; then, thirdly, there is what Shakespeare does:

Shakespeare too either places comic figures and scenes alongside his firm individual characters and tragic situation and conflicts, or else by a profound humour lifts these characters away above themselves and their crude, restricted, and false aims. For example, Falstaff, the Fool in *Lear*, the Musicians' scene in *Romeo and Juliet* [IV, V] are examples of the first kind, Richard III of the second.⁷

What is significant for us is, first, that Hegel takes Falstaff to have fullness of character, and second, that the nature of Falstaffian wit has a role to play in the dissolution of art at the end of Hegel's history of art. I discuss wit and the dissolution of art in Chapter 11.

It is appropriate to preface our discussion of Falstaff with some words about Shakespeare's use of the word "wit." From this we see that wit has different implications in Renaissance thought than in Hegel's or ours. But we also see that our use of Falstaffian wit in connection with Hegel's conception of wit is consonant with one of the ways that Shakespeare uses it.

Shakespeare's Use of the Word "Wit"

For Shakespeare, wit in general means: "mental faculty, intellectual power of any kind; understanding, judgment, imagination (the proverbial *five wits* being defined: common wit, imagination, fantasy, estimation, memory)."⁸ This is evident in Sonnet 141: "my five wits nor my five senses can dissuade one foolish heart from serving thee."⁹ Shakespeare also uses "wit" to refer to the mind in general.¹⁰ For example, the gravedigger says that Hamlet was sent to England to "recover his wits."¹¹ Sometimes Shakespeare means it to refer to the common sense, to

understanding or judgment. At other times, he identifies it with wisdom, as in *Lucretious* 153 “so then we do neglect the thing we have, and all for want of wit, make something nothing by neglecting it.”¹²

But Shakespeare also uses it in a more narrow sense to denote “the faculty of associating ideas in a new and ingenious, and at the same time natural and pleasing way, which is at present its principal signification.”¹³ For example, in *Measure for Measure*, “Great men may jest with saints; ’tis wit in them, / But in the less, foul profanation.”¹⁴

Correspondingly, Shakespeare uses wit to refer to a “person of any degree of mental capacity” as in “wits of no higher breeding.”¹⁵ It can also refer to a man “of fancy or wit,” as in “How now, wit, whither wander you?”¹⁶

Finally, Shakespeare’s use of “wit” as verb means “to know.”¹⁷

With regard to the general use of wit in Shakespeare as *any* mental faculty, it is important to note that for the Elizabethans, man’s wit was thought of “in close relation to the fall of man.”¹⁸ The fact that for the Elizabethans our wits and wills were darkened by sin is important for our discussion of more developed forms of wit in Part III of this book. In particular, it is important for our discussion in Chapter 12 of infection and cure of (what I there call) the Universal Sovereign Will.¹⁹ I leave this discussion until then.

Now, in *Henry IV* Part 1, Falstaff is a self-proclaimed “wit.” Falstaff says: “I am not only witty in myself, but the cause that is wit in other men.”²⁰ His wittiness lies in his actions and his ingenious use of language. His wittiness also gives rise to a certain kind of wisdom. My argument in what follows is that his wit arises as symptom of and partial cure for a culture alienated by faulty concepts of sovereignty.

Part I. Falstaff’s Wit in *Henry IV* Part 1

The Context: Ambiguity Reigns

Henry IV is full of ambiguities: who is the real king after Richard II, Bolingbroke or Mortimer? Which of the two Harry’s is more princely, Hal or Percy? Who is the father figure for Hal, Bolingbroke or Falstaff? In a time of corruption, who are the real thieves? Ambiguity allows for slippages and multiple interpretations; it creates political unrest and provides the soil upon which wit flourishes. Ambiguities about sovereignty destroyed Richard II. Falstaff revels in them. Let us look at how ambiguities work in *Henry IV* Part 1.

Mirrors and Inversions

These ambiguities are inherited from the mirroring and inversion of identities that we saw in *Richard II*. In *Henry IV* we have, for example, the mirroring of

Harry and Harry. Henry IV (Bolingbroke the king) laments that Harry Percy is not his son instead of Prince Harry (Hal): "O, that it could be proved / That some night-tripping fairy had exchanged / In cradle clothes our children where they lay, / And called mine Percy, his Plantagenet! / Then would I have his Harry, and he mine."²¹ These mirror images (Harry and Harry) are also inversions: Henry IV sees his earlier self in Percy and Richard II in his son Hal: "For all the world, / As thou art to this hour was Richard then, / When I from France set foot at Ravenspurgh, / And even as I was then is Percy now."²² Henry IV compares Hal's over-familiarity with the commoners to Richard II, "[t]he skipping King" who "ambled up and down / With shallow jesters and rash bavin wits," that king who became "sick and blunted with community."²³

These problems of mirrored and inverted identities stem from the main problem of determining sovereignty. So let us turn to that.

The Name of the King

What should it be? There are competing lines of ascent to the throne: Percy and his coconspirators think Mortimer, not Bolingbroke, should be king. This collision drives overarching dramatic action of the play (the war).

The King's Coats

It is unclear on the battlefield who is the king for, as Hotspur declares: "The king hath many marching in his coats."²⁴ Douglas swears: "Now by my sword, I will kill all his coats. / I'll murder all his wardrobe, piece by piece, / Until I meet the king."²⁵ And later: "Another King! They grow like Hydra's heads."²⁶ Douglas challenges one of the decoys: "What art thou / That counterfeit'st the person of a king?"²⁷ As it turns out, this time it is the real king that he challenges. But Douglas replies: "I fear thou art another counterfeit."²⁸

Perhaps Douglas fears it is a decoy, or perhaps he is implying that Henry IV is a counterfeit. Ambiguity reigns on the play's real and linguistic battlefields.

Falstaff's Wit

When the very pinnacle of humanity in this realm (the king) is an ambiguous person, ethics and language slide around on uncertain ground. It is in this environment that Falstaff thrives. In Richard II, we witnessed Richard's slide from keeping his own time to being Bolingbroke's Jack of the clock. Now with Falstaff, the "new Jack," time is happily and completely out of joint. We are introduced to Falstaff for the very first time with a discussion about time:

Falstaff: "Now, Hal, what time of day is it, lad?"

Prince Harry: "Thou art so fat-witted with drinking of old sack, and unbuttoning thee after supper, and sleeping upon benches after noon, that thou has forgotten to demand that truly which thou wouldst truly know. What a devil hast thou to do with the time of the day? Unless hours were cups of sack, and minutes capons, and clocks the tongues of bawds, and dials the signs of leaping-houses, and the blessed sun himself a fair hot wench in flame-coloured taffeta, I see no reason why thou shouldst be so superfluous to demand the time of the day."

Falstaff: "Indeed you come near me now, Hal, for we that take purses go by the moon and the seven stars, and not 'By Phoebus, he, that wand'ring knight so fair.'"29

Falstaff's wit does not try to recuperate some unchangeable time or authority: It goes on its merry changeable way. Falstaff's time is not the time of the sovereign sun: He is in the fallen, sub-lunar world of changing tides.

Falstaff's language is likewise somewhat lunatic. It self-consciously embraces mirroring and inversions. His wordplay involves double entendres. This wit exhibits a different kind of judgment and a different kind of wisdom. Let us look at some of the kinds of wit he exhibits.

Sometimes His Wit Is Just Funny

For example, when Falstaff is stuck walking without a horse he says: "If I travel but four foot by the square further afoot, I shall break my wind."³⁰

At Other Times There Is More at Stake

His wit comes into tension with other elements of the play. For example, on the battlefield when Hal asks for his pistol, Hal says "Give it me. What, is it in the case?" And Falstaff replies "Ay, Hal; / 'Tis hot, 'tis hot. There's that will sack a city." The Prince draws it out, and finds it to be a bottle of sack. The Prince exclaims, "What, is it a time to jest and dally now?" Throwing the bottle at Falstaff, he exits.³¹

At other times, Falstaff's wit cuts through deception to reveal insight into how things really are in the realm. Here are three examples:

COUNTERFEITING MAN: THE "TRUE AND PERFECT IMAGE OF LIFE INDEED"

On the battlefield, Falstaff has pretended to be dead in order to avoid losing his life in battle. He muses to himself about his having "counterfeited" a dead man.

Falstaff: “. . . ’Sblood, ’twas time to counterfeit, or that hot termagant Scot had paid me, Scot and lot too. Counterfeit? I lie, I am no counterfeit. To die is to be a counterfeit, for he is but the counterfeit of a man who hath not the life of a man. [I.e., he who has not the life of a man is but a counterfeit of a man. What *does* make one a counterfeit is when one is a man with no life—JB.] But to counterfeit dying when man thereby liveth is to be no counterfeit, but the true and perfect image of life indeed. The better part of valour is discretion, in the which better part I have saved my life.”³²

In other words, the action that saves life is the true and perfect image of life; counterfeiting is an action that saves life; therefore counterfeiting in order to save life is the true and perfect image of life. Note that it is the act of counterfeiting and not the counterfeit (the mere shape of the dead man) which is the perfect image of life.

It is odd that Falstaff uses the terms true and perfect here, when throughout the play he has consistently (and wittily) perverted any notion of truth and perfection. For example, earlier in the play, Falstaff is lying through his teeth about how many people attacked and robbed him.³³ Hal says that “these lies are like their father that begets them—gross as a mountain, open, palpable.”³⁴ Falstaff replies “What, art thou mad? Art thou mad? Is not the truth the truth?”

Given Falstaff’s abuse of truth, how are we to take his claim here that to counterfeit being dead in order to stay alive is to be the *true* and perfect image of life? I answer as follows. First, we recall that it is not the shape of the apparently dead man who is the true image of life, but rather the living man *playing dead* in order to save his life. It is the counterfeiting man who is the “true and perfect image of life indeed.” Therefore, Falstaff celebrates the man as living and as lying (here in both senses of lying on the ground and lying that he is dead). So in fact we have here Falstaff’s credo, the pragmatic politic of his wit: To counterfeit is to be alive and stay alive. In this, he justifies being a liar. Falstaff is, in every case, just life saving itself from death.

Falstaff’s wit, it seems, is a viable political pragmatic tool in a time in which violence and ambiguity reign.

FALSTAFF THE JACK

A second case of Falstaff’s witty insight occurs when Hal sees Falstaff alive after he thought he saw him dead. Hal says to him “Thou are not what thou seem’st.”³⁵ Falstaff’s replies “No, that’s certain: I am not a double man” [Falstaff is punning on several levels: He is not two men, not a ghost, not fat as two men]. . . . “But if I be not Jack Falstaff, then am I a jack.”³⁶ Falstaff is as always self-consciously, wittily, not himself. His punning language raises truth from honest claims about identity to claims that are brazenly and self-consciously

contradictions, claims that are nonetheless true. This is a wonderful antidote to Richard II's looking in the mirror. Falstaff makes mirror inversions his game: His language mirrors and inverts the sovereignty of his self; his jest shows that he knows he is always already reflectively different from himself.

HONOR

In contrast to Percy, who speaks of honor in earnest,³⁷ Falstaff reveals honor to be the sign of a dead man.

Can honour set-to a leg? No. Or an arm? No. Or take away the grief of a wound? No. Honour hath no skill in surgery, then? No. What is honour? A word. What is in that word "honour"? What is that "honour"? Air. A trim reckoning! Who hath it? He that died o' Wednesday. Doth he feel it? No. Doth he hear it? No. 'Tis insensible then? Yea, to the dead. But will it not live with the living? No. Why? Detraction will not suffer it. Therefore I'll none of it. Honour is a mere scutcheon. And so ends my catechism.³⁸

I discuss Falstaff's relation to honor below. First, let us discuss why someone's honor cannot stand up against detraction (slander). Worcester argues against accepting the king's pardon, for "Look how we can, or sad or merrily, / Interpretation will misquote our looks."³⁹ In times of ambiguity, there is a threatening multiplicity;⁴⁰ things and people appear to be the opposite of what they are. But again, Falstaff revels in this environment. He says "Lord, Lord, how this world is given to lying!" Anyone who is honest (like Percy) cannot survive in this ambiguous environment.⁴¹

Falstaff and the Point of Honor

I mentioned above that Falstaff's wit is a kind of recovery from the alienating effects of the social mirror. The social mirror of Falstaff's time is supposed to reflect chivalry. But on the battlefield, Falstaff sees only a dead man. Yorick's skull made Hamlet realize the framed and limited nature of memory. Similarly, in the dead man, Falstaff sees the counterfeit nature of social reflections.

Hamlet's and Falstaff's insights arise from the negation of subjectivity that is presented by death. Falstaff's rejection of honor exhibits a reflective, inverting kind of negation. Let us see how it works.

In the *Aesthetics*, Hegel writes that the Romantic Form of Chivalry has three moments: Honor, Love, and Fidelity. Hegel declares that Falstaff presents a comic form of chivalry.⁴² This is right. But we can be more specific than Hegel is in the *Aesthetics*. Falstaff is the comic form of chivalry *only in terms of*

its first moment: honor. In terms of love and fidelity, he is not a comic figure—at least not with regard to Hal. In this lies the tragic nature for Falstaff of Hal's rejection of him. I discuss this love and fidelity in Chapter 7. Here, I want to focus on how Falstaff presents a comic form of chivalric honor.

Though Hegel does not write this explicitly, it is clear that in his account of chivalry, honor is a category of Spirit, of the "I" that is a "we" and the "we" that is an "I." For according to Hegel, honor is both subjective and social. Honor is a "shining in *myself*" that "must also be envisaged and recognized by *others* who again on their side may demand equal recognition for their honour."⁴³ The fact that my honor depends on others makes honor "completely vulnerable."⁴⁴

Hegel refers to honor as an "ideal infinite point."⁴⁵ It is ideal because it is a reflection of the mind upon itself: Honor is "independence reflected into itself which has as its essence this reflection alone."⁴⁶ It is an "infinite point" because the entire character stands or falls on a point of honor.

The content of honor is completely variable. The "infinite point" of honor could land on something trivial. What matters is that the point is pivotal for the person who stakes his honor on it. Likewise, the content of honor can be ethical or not. Again, it is taking the point as a question of honor that matters. Honor "leaves to pure contingency whether what is at stake is what is inherently ethical and necessary or contingent and meaningless."⁴⁷

We can see that the grounds for comedy (as well as tragedy for the person staking his honor) are implicit in this concept of honor. Touchstone's witty repartee about it in *As You Like It* exemplifies Hegel's point:

Touchstone: "No, by mine honour, but I was bid to come for you."

Rosalind: "Where learned you that oath (. . .)?"

Touchstone: "Of a certain knight that swore 'by his honour' they were good pancakes, and swore 'by his honour' the mustard was naught. Now I'll stand to it the pancakes were naught and the mustard was good, and yet was not the knight forsworn."⁴⁸

Falstaff's identity is indeed a shining. But it is not a shining inward of self-reflection on an infinite point. That was Richard II's view. Rather, Falstaff reflects that shining outward. He uses his subjectivity to reflect back to others, in a social context, their own serious infinite point. He thereby makes each point merely one among many points. This makes the seriousness of honor appear comic. Richard II was eventually able to see his thoughts as a multitude of people. Falstaff trumps that: He reflects the social landscapes of any individual he encounters. His identity is the mirror-image of honor; he is a

mirror that reflects another person's infinite point into an outwardly radiating (and funny) multiplicity.

In other words, Falstaff turns every "ideal infinite point" of honor back outward for all to see and laugh at. They laugh because he invites them to see particular claims of honor as ridiculous "pricks." An example of this is Falstaff's mirroring of Lord Chief Justice's behavior: The Chief Justice had tried to ignore Falstaff by not answering him; Falstaff does the same to him. When Falstaff is chastised for doing so by the Chief Justice, Falstaff replies that it was a fool (i.e., the Chief Justice) who taught him those manners. Falstaff ends with a touché: "This is the right fencing grace, my lord—tap for tap, and so part fair."⁴⁹ Such are the pricks of honor.

In reflecting the ideal infinite point of honor into its social multiplicity, Falstaff cures sovereign self-reflection from its alienation. If one does not get the joke, one is simply too single-minded.

Nonetheless, in the above exchange, the Chief Justice was originally attempting to make Falstaff honor his promise to marry Mistress Quickly. In that, we see that Falstaff falls short in his judgment about honor: He is wrong to abuse her and the Chief Justice is right to challenge him. There *is* a side to honor that is linked with justice. We will return to this.

We recall that Falstaff says "I am not only witty in myself, but the cause that is wit in other men." Falstaff's ability to turn the subjective into the common is achieved largely through his wit about his body. Everyone, including Falstaff, makes jokes about his fatness. His body is the object in which other people find their wit by making jokes about it. It is a stage, the large surface on which everyone makes theater. It is the place in which others find their otherness, it is the "I" that is a "we," it is Spirit incarnate.

Falstaff's fat body is a place of multiplicity, a place of multiple jokes about multiplicity. This is never more evident than in Falstaff's declaration to Hal: "Banish plump Jack, and banish all the world."⁵⁰ Falstaff's ability to negate the ideal infinite point of honor by reflecting it back into the multiplicity that it really is, is just one of the ways in which Falstaff perpetrates "crimes" against the self-righteous. Our task now is to see the philosophical character of these crimes.

Falstaff's Crimes against Language and Property Are "Negative Infinite Judgments"

Wit is a pleasant crime against language and social norms. Falstaff is a thief and a wit. Indeed his thievery is inseparable from wit, which is why his real crimes of theft are also (for the most part at least) funny. Let us look in more detail at what "negative infinite judgment" is in Hegel's philosophy and then apply that to Falstaff.

Hegel's Account of Negative Infinite Judgment

I will state the definition briefly and then explain it in detail. According to Hegel, a negative infinite judgment negates an infinite judgment. An infinite judgment expresses possession; so a negative infinite judgment expresses the negation of possession. A negative infinite judgment is able to be performed because there is always already an incommensurability in an infinite judgment. In other words, the expression of possession ("this is mine") already has in it the incommensurability of the opposition of my will to the thing: When I say a thing is mine, I am imposing a link between myself and the thing that is determined objectively only through my willing it. A negative infinite judgment contradicts my will by saying that the thing is not mine. In doing so it merely draws out that incommensurability between myself and the thing that was always there.

When someone steals "my" possession, what is being negated for me is not just the thing that I claimed was for me (i.e, it is not simply the fact that the thing is no longer there for me). It also negates my declared right to the thing. A negative infinite judgment is the negation of that right.

Now let us look at the textual support and clarification of this.⁵¹

In Hegel's account of property rights in the *Philosophy of Right*, he states the following. "Property has its modifications determined in the course of the will's relation to the thing. This relation is A) *taking possession* of the thing directly . . . ; B) *use* (the thing is negative in contrast with the will and so it is in the thing as something to be negated that the will has its embodiment); C) *alienation*, the reflection of the will back from the thing into itself. These three are respectively the positive, negative, and infinite judgements of the will on the thing."⁵²

According to Knox, these three types of judgment

. . . represent progressive attempts to attach a predicate to a subject; e.g. (i) since the *will is embodied in its property*, we may say that "the will is a particular thing, its property"—"this property is my will," "this and my will are identical." But the will is universal and the thing is particular, and so the thing is the negative of the universal or the will, and (ii) the will is therefore not the thing. *By using it the will negates the thing in order to bring it into accordance with itself*. Such negation, however, can never completely achieve its end, because the will, as universal, can never be adequately embodied in any one particular. Hence (iii) the will must be asserted to be the will, and the *object must be altogether spurned or alienated*. This is not a mere negative judgment, but a "*negatively infinite judgment*" which asserts a total incongruity between the subject (the will) and the predicate (the thing).⁵³

For clarification, Knox advises us to look at Hegel's *Encyclopedia of Logic*.⁵⁴ There, Hegel clarifies judgment in general and then explains that whether we are dealing with a tautology or a synthetic unity, there is always a moment of difference between subject and predicate. Since that passage is opaque,⁵⁵ let us go straight to Hegel's clarification of it.

The *negatively* infinite judgement, in which there is no longer any relation between subject and predicate at all, tends to be cited in formal logic only as a meaningless curiosity. But, in fact, this infinite judgement must not be considered to be the proximate dialectical result of the preceding immediate judgements (the positive and the simply negative), whose finitude and untruth come to light explicitly in it. *A crime can be considered as an objective example of the negative-infinite judgment.* Someone who commits a crime—for argument's sake a theft—does not merely deny the particular right of someone else to this particular thing (as in a suit about civil right); instead, *he denies the rights of that person completely*, and therefore he is not merely obliged to return the thing that he stole, but is punished as well, because *he has violated right as such, i.e., right in general.*

*The civil law suit, in contrast, is an example of the simple negative judgment, because . . . right in general . . . remains recognised.*⁵⁶

Let us turn to the *Philosophy of Right* to look more carefully at crime. There Hegel writes that

Crime—a negatively infinite judgment in its full sense, whereby not only the particular (i.e., the subsumption under my will of a single thing . . .) is negated, but also the universality and infinity in the predicate “mine” (i.e., my capacity for rights). Here the negation does not come about with the co-operation of my thinking (as it does in fraud . . .) but in defiance of it. This is the sphere of criminal law.⁵⁷

Knox explains that “The criminal by wronging someone is in effect denying that his victim has any rights, i.e., he asserts a total incompatibility between his victim and rights. Hence ‘you have no rights’ is a ‘negatively infinite judgement.’”⁵⁸

Falstaff's Thieveries Are Negative Infinite Judgments

Since the crime of theft is clearly articulated by Hegel to be a negative infinite judgment, not much needs to be argued to declare Falstaff a master of negative infinite judgments. Falstaff regularly denies both strangers and his best friends

(e.g., Mistress Quickly) their property and he puts the idea of their *right to property* into question.

In another respect, however, Falstaff is performing a negation of the negative infinite judgments of his society: He robs the implicit thieves of feudalism, retaliating against feudalism's unfair distribution of wealth and power. His humorous thieving antics and his sending-up of feudal authority make him, *in comparison with much of his society*, kind of just. Falstaff has a long way to go before he could be said to be genuinely just. But Falstaff must be credited with insight into the way in which feudal and royal property-rights are a joke.

It is not just Falstaff who is in on this "joke." In preparing to rob Falstaff and the other thieves of their loot, Hal says to Poins "The thieves have bound the true men; now could thou and I rob the thieves, and go merrily to London."⁵⁹ There is more intended by Hal in this than Poins could know. Hal has been counterfeiting friendliness at Eastcheap and he will leave these thieves high and dry when he goes to London to be king. The logic of *that* robbery spans the four plays we are analyzing (from *Richard II* to *Henry V*). Let us take a moment to follow this logic.

First, in *Richard II*, Richard becomes conscious of the incommensurability between his will and the crown. But he does so too late. The thief Bolingbroke had already successfully bound the naïve "true man" (Richard II) and stolen the crown. Second, when Bolingbroke is king, thievery hangs in the air: throughout *Henry IV*, the king's "right" to possession is pocked with negation. Third, Hal does not believe in any immediate "right to the property of the crown." He knows property-rights are socially mediated. He uses this to his own advantage. Hal's insight is, however, so thorough-going that he refuses to recognize Falstaff's right to Hal's allegiance. This reveals a flaw in Hal. Hal's eventual rejection of Falstaff—a rejection that robs Falstaff of his will to live—is a crime that has lost all sign of wit. In the coming chapters, I take up this logic again and show how Hal, as King Henry V, goes down the wrong road; his logic is finally that of an alienated sovereign will.

In the context of this longer story of thievery, the character of Falstaff, and indeed most of the play *Henry IV*, presents a pleasant interlude. It is a witty break in a sequence of progressively more complex, murderous, and unjust crimes committed in the name of the sovereign self. Falstaff's "crimes of wit and counterfeiting" give hope that history is not just a bad infinite judgment. For where Falstaff self-consciously engages negative infinite judgments in a witty, somewhat communal way, Hal will drive negative infinite judgment to its most morally bankrupt extreme.

For now, let us focus on how wit, as a crime against language and property, has something restorative in it that must nonetheless be developed beyond Falstaff's idea of it. To do this, let us begin with Hegel's discussion of wit in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

Part II. Hegel's Discussion of Wit in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*

Honest Consciousness vs. Witty Consciousness

In Hegel's *Phenomenology*, the witty person is dialectically paired with the honest person. (In *As You Like It*, Celia observes "for always the dullness of the fool is the whetstone of the wits."⁶⁰) According to Hegel, the difference between the honest fool and the witty person is the following. The "speech of this (witty) mind . . . is fully aware of its confused state"⁶¹ whereas the "simple consciousness of the true and the good"⁶² is not.

In this world . . . [t]he honest individual takes each moment to be an abiding essentiality. . . . The disrupted [witty] consciousness . . . is consciousness of the perversion. What prevails in it is the Notion, which brings together in a unity the thoughts which, in the honest individual, lie far apart, and its language is therefore clever and witty.⁶³

The witty person is dialectically savvy: He knows that any thing or claim can be turned into its opposite, and rises above that. Wit "perverts in its speech all that is unequivocal, because what is self-identical is only an abstraction, but in its actual existence is in its own self a perversion."⁶⁴

For example, for Percy, honor is the highest virtue. For Falstaff, honor is an abstraction, a word, "air." As Worcester shows, we are-for-others and therefore our honor can be perverted by slander; the intrinsic in-itself of honor turns into its opposite (the dishonorable). Furthermore, for Falstaff, honor's actual existence is the reverse of what the honorable person takes it to be: It is not the living person, but a "mere scutcheon," the heraldic shield borne at that person's funeral. In other words, honor cannot be the true and perfect image of life, for it is the emblem of the dead man. For the witty consciousness, the cultural entity called "Honor," like everything else that is self-identical, is the counterfeit. Only the *counterfeiting* man is real.

In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the counterfeiting man is Rameau's nephew.⁶⁵ Hegel writes that the witty talk is

the madness of the musician (Rameau's nephew) "who heaped up and mixed together thirty arias, Italian, French, tragic, comic, of every sort; now with a deep bass he descended into hell, then, contracting his throat, he rent the vaults of heaven with a falsetto tone, frantic and soothed, imperious and mocking, by turns." To the tranquil consciousness which, in its honest way, takes the melody of

the Good and the True to consist in the evenness of the notes, i.e., in unison, this talk appears as a “rigmarole of wisdom and folly, as a medley of as much skill as baseness, of as many correct as false ideas, a mixture compounded of a complete perversion of sentiment, of absolute shamefulfulness, and of perfect frankness and truth. . . .” [Hegel’s citation is from Diderot’s *Rameau’s Nephew*. Hegel goes on:] The former [witty consciousness], however, will find in their very frankness a strain of reconciliation, will find in their subversive depths the all-powerful note which restores Spirit to itself.⁶⁶

We have seen how Falstaff not only passes witty judgment on cherished notions of culture but articulates their truth as well. Hegel likewise holds that the witty consciousness

is the self-centered self that knows, not only how to pass judgement on and chatter about everything, but how to give witty expression to the *contradiction* that is present in the solid elements of the *actual* world, and also in the fixed determinations posited by judgement; and this contradiction is their truth. Looked at from the point of view of form, it knows everything to be self-alienated, being for self is separated from being-in-itself; what is meant, and purpose, are separated from truth; and from both again, the being-for-another, the ostensible meaning from the real meaning, from the true thing and intention.⁶⁷

According to Hegel, wit is nonetheless limited and in its current shape does not rise above morality. It alone has the capacity to become a spirit of true worth. But it has to develop further for this to happen. To see why, let us briefly discuss wit’s dialectical role in Spirit in Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

Since it is impossible to state Hegel’s entire argument here, I will begin with a two-sentence overview. Then I describe one central dialectical development leading up to wit that occurs in Hegel’s account, namely, the dialectical development of the monarch and his court. To help explain that moment, I use (very generally) the analogous dialectic of the thing and its properties in Chapter 2 of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. I then explain why the dialectic is so complex, and go through it again, this time focusing on it as a development in language. From there, we are in a position to conclude with the performative nature of speech as Judith Butler defines it in her book *Excitable Speech*. For the transition she calls for is analogous to what we have seen: It is a transition from the constraining notion of the sovereign subject in language to the liberating counter-mobilizing of culture through language. My conclusion is at once a reproach of the limits

of Falstaff's wit, and a call for his wit to develop, first into the moral domain, and second, beyond that into the realm of political compassion.

Culture's *Omniplosion*⁶⁸

The General Movement from True Spirit to Morality (within which Wit Arises)

In Hegel's account, Spirit's naïve forms of ethics are exemplified in Ancient Greece and Rome. They turn out to consist of false notions of destiny or atomism (Human and Divine Laws, Legal atomism). In their wake, Spirit is left in dissolution and self-alienation. It stays this way until it reaches self-certainty in Kantian morality. Wit arises halfway through this development, when French monarchic culture is exploding at every one of its points. This occurs in the period directly preceding the French revolution.⁶⁹

*An Entity's Deception Revealed: The Monarch and the Courtiers/
The Thing and Its Properties*

Cultural alienation develops into a pervasive ambiguity about power and wealth. This is analogous to the dialectic in Chapter 2 of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*: "Perception, or the Thing and its Deception." In perception, we have a thing with its many properties. Its deception is that it appears to be an intrinsic substance (i.e., its in-itself appears to be the same as its being-for-others). The dialectic of the thing in relation to its properties proves this to be a perceptual deception. That is, the properties at first seem to cohere in the thing, so we say that the thing is this *and* this, etc. But it also appears that the properties are exclusive of each other, so we speak of this *and also* this, and not that, etc. The thing's substance falls apart into judgments about its properties. Perhaps it is the self and its judgments that hold the thing together? This possibility raises further dialectical moments. Only when the self realizes properly its role in synthesizing the thing (though not any exclusive role), is it able to move on to a more adequate account of the thing in the chapter on understanding.

In our current discussion of wit in Hegel, the "thing" is any cultural entity involving power or wealth. The cultural entity's deception is that the cultural entity appears to be intrinsically existent. But the dialectic of the cultural entity with its properties reveals that, in fact, each entity emerges from a dialectic with human interpreters (Spirit). Hegel discusses many cultural entities. Let us focus on his discussion of a monarch and his court.

On the one hand, the court is an inclusive "And" of noble courtiers who stand together under the name of the king (their language is that of earnest flattery). On the other, the court is an excluding "Also" of self-interested courtiers

who are self-deluding, self-alienated, base flatterers; they only appear to stand together under what is essentially the empty name of the king.

The individual's double character of being-in-itself and being-for-self (e.g., the courtier gives honest counsel and yet is also self-serving) has been one cause for dialectical inversions of power and wealth. But eventually, the self realizes the disruption is due to its having taken a one-sided view. When it learns to see the relations as self-conscious judgments (analogous to forces) rather than sovereign entities, we have the moment of wit.

In Chapter 2 of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the self that was caught up in perception eventually moves to a better level of explanation of the thing: that of "The Understanding" (the chapter that follows perception). Instead of the "fool on the hill seeing the sun going down, the eye in his mind sees the world spinning round" (The Beatles). Analogously, the final moment of wit is an enlightenment understanding of the truth lying either beyond the world of cultural appearances, or in its interior. "This vanity of all reality and every definite Notion, vanity which knows itself to be such, is the double reflection of the real world into itself."⁷⁰ That is, wit either becomes the proto-Kierkegaard who believes in the purity of heart (faith in the Heaven beyond), or it sees the world as a function of pure insight. These two make up the next moment in Hegel's account of the dialectical progression of culture.

Why Wit's Dialectic Is So Complex

The dialectic leading up to wit involves two directions at work simultaneously: There is the relation between the objects in the world (state power and wealth), and the mind's judgment (i.e., the attribution of good or bad to its objects). At first, the dialectic appears to be strictly between the external objects (state power turns out to be wealth and vice versa). But it is also a function of the mind's dialectical relation with its objects. So the good turns into the bad, the noble turns out to be the ignoble and vice versa.

The whole development is a giant syllogism with four extremes at any given time (two apparently external extremes, and the poles of subject and object). Judgment is the middle term. *En route*, the moments spin around in a complex, developing dialectic. Once consciousness stops making unreflected judgments about its object and reflects directly on its judgment-making, consciousness moves from being caught up as an actor in the cultural dialectic (e.g., here appearing noble, there ignoble, here appearing good, there bad, here serving others, there self-serving) and becomes the soul of the dialectic. It then lies at the heart of the turmoil, still caught in it but now self-consciously aware of its self-disruption. Through wit, which capitalizes on the multiple and self-contradictory character of any cultural entity including its own self, conscious-

ness achieves self-recognition within self-diremption, a degree of truth, and the possibility of developing into something of truly universal worth.⁷¹

Language: From Sovereign-Speak to Wit and Beyond

Consciousness' cultural projection thinks it has a representative of the whole, namely the "unlimited monarch." But once consciousness has been through the process that reveals that the king is only king because of a cultural dynamic, it realizes the "negative infinite judgement"⁷² of its own wittiness whereby nothing is sacred precisely because every thing is a function of how we judge it to be. The incommensurability present in joining subject and predicate (or person and crown) is out in the open. No one can go back to asserting "royal" possession without being made the object of wit.

According to Hegel, this transition happens in language. The king is named and in that name is distinct from everyone else; yet it is the court members who tell him who he is that make his name be what it is. Given the dynamic of selfish vs. honorable relations that exist between the court members and the king, the name is, in itself, empty. It is only a reality in so far as it is sustained by flattery. We see this in *Henry IV* Part 1, when Percy prefaces his compliment to Douglas by saying "If speaking truth / In this fine age were not thought flattery."⁷³

When the witty consciousness comes on the stage, it has realized that no projected "I" can be socially pristine, including its own, and that no declaration about the world is sovereign, even though each judgment takes itself to be sovereign.

[Wit] therefore creates this vanity itself and is the soul that supports it. Power and wealth are the supreme ends of its exertions. . . . [And wit knows that it itself] is the power over them, while they are vain things. The fact that in possessing them it is itself apart from and beyond them, is exhibited in its *witty talk which is, therefore, its supreme interest and the truth of the whole relationship*. In such talk, this particular self, *qua* this pure self, determined neither by reality nor by thought, develops into a spiritual self that is of truly universal worth.⁷⁴

This concludes our discussion of wit in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

A Note Regarding the Role of Wit in Hegel's Philosophy

That wit has, according to Hegel, a higher calling is evident in wit's appearance at the end of the *Aesthetics*. There, in the final shape of art, Hegel argues that wit is one of the means by which the Romantic Art Form falls into decay.

Wit therefore marks the dissolution of art and the transition to philosophy.⁷⁵ We will return to this in Chapter 11 when we discuss the idea of there being an absolute standpoint.

Conclusion. Wit's End: Its Limits and Universal Worth

On the one hand, Falstaff is the king of ambiguity. He is endearing to us because he helps us escape the grip of single-mindedness and other deceptive cultural attitudes.

On the other hand, Falstaff fails because he is witty *for himself*. He fails to deal justly with Mistress Quickly, and he lacks compassion for the men he enlists as his troops and then sends off to their death.⁷⁶ In the latter case, his words have perlocutionary power: Weak men are chosen by him for war and they go to their deaths at his command. His speech, however funny from his perspective, is in cases like this, performatively antisocial.

According to Hegel, the witty consciousness is limited: Although it can understand and pass judgment, it does not *comprehend*.⁷⁷ I propose that a *comprehending wit* has to do with a compassionate use of the performative nature of speech. Let me explain.

The dialectic from monarch to negative infinite judgment can be understood in terms of a postmodern rejection of the sovereign subject and the development of an ethics of performativity. We saw that according to Hegel, wit expresses the self-alienation in the intersection of judgment and objective realities. The *conventions* that allow the judge's words to put someone in jail (Austin's illocutionary performative words) and the *consequences* that follow from a racial slur (Austin's perlocutionary) are social, dynamic, non-absolute cultural entities. They depend on self-conscious reflection, which involves the moment of self-alienation. In Hegel's reading, wit expresses and celebrates the reality of that self-alienation. Without alienation, the judge's authority would be sovereign in the sense of God-given, as would be the racial slur. Without alienation there is no possibility of a reply to words that wound. Without wit, there would be no human worth arising out of the solution.

While honor may not mend a leg, words can hurt.⁷⁸ That is the theme of Butler's *Excitable Speech*.⁷⁹ Her view is that there is alienation and instability in any speech act, and political instability as a result of that. But that is the key: We must use that instability to counter hate speech, "putting into risk the security of linguistic life."⁸⁰ We do this by, for example, using the very same hate words in different ways. For instance, the gay community has appropriated the term "queer." In Hegelian terms, this expresses and celebrates in a socially helpful way, the same distinction between the cultural in-itself and its being-for-others that Falstaff's more limited play on words does when he says that if he's not Jack, he's a Jack.

Much work has to be done before someone like Falstaff or Rameau's nephew can engage in Butler's social linguistic activism. The witty consciousness has to start engaging in linguistic behavior that reflects political compassion as well as differences. It must develop beyond Absolute Freedom and Terror, beyond Kantian morality to the moment of forgiveness.

But all of the moments in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* through which Falstaff must now pass, as well as any of his ethical achievements, could be relapses into dogma unless Falstaff retains his wit. Although the alienation inherent in language gives us a politics of difference, wit adds something. We recall that for Hegel the witty consciousness will find in the "subversive depths the all-powerful note which restores Spirit to itself."⁸¹ Hegel does not say what he means by the all-powerful note, but I like to think that it has to do not just with subversions that liberate, but also with the pleasure involved in wit, and the largeness of spirit that wit invites.

We will take up the topic of wit again in Chapters 10, 11, and 12. For now, we must look further at negative infinite judgment. We do this, on the one hand, to discover how it turns into evil (through the unforgiving policies of Hal as Henry V) and on other, to discover how the crime of wit can develop into justice.

Section 2

Sovereign Deceit and the Rejection of Wit

(Chapters 7, 8, and 9)

Introduction

This chapter and the next two chapters make up a single argument about the evil of Shakespeare's apparently virtuous character, Henry V.¹ In Chapter 7, we look at Henry V's rejection of wit, his apparent honor, and his pretense of virtue. We use Hegel's theory of virtue to undermine this pretense and to redirect our interpretation of Henry V as evil. In Chapter 8, we look in-depth at Hegel's account of evil in the *Aesthetics* and in the *Philosophy of Right*. Hegel's account in the latter work shows us how the negative infinite judgments of crime and evil are necessary developments of a developing social will. While they give rise to alienation, they force the dialectic toward higher forms of social justice. In Chapter 9, we look in detail at the "slip" of conscience into evil, and at hypocrisy. We give this scope and depth by looking at the characters of Richard III, Macbeth, and Hamlet and their relationships to conscience and to evil. The conclusion is that, on the one hand, Henry V's *behavior* is no less consciously chosen than Richard III's; on the other hand, the evil of Henry V's *motivation* is unconscious to him. The reason for this is that, as with Macbeth, his deliberations have within them a dream-like structure; he "slips" into evil. For these reasons, he is the extreme of evil as Hegel defines it, for he is the hypocrite who has fooled himself.

Contrary to what Hal as King Henry V thinks, the mirror inversions and temporal disorders inherited from his predecessors have not been solved. He has not "redeemed time"; he has rejected its excess. In our final chapter of Part II (Chapter 10), we discuss whether redemption of time is possible in ethical life or whether a higher standpoint is necessary.

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Chapter 7

Henry V's Unchangeableness

His Rejection of Wit and His Posture of Virtue Reinterpreted in the Light of Hegel's Theory of Virtue²

Part I. Henry V's Background and His Rejection of Wit

"Shakespeare does not let us locate Hal/Henry V's true self; a king is necessarily something of a counterfeit, and Henry is a great king" (Bloom).³

Prince Harry (Hal): "The thieves have bound the true men; now could thou and I rob the thieves, and go merrily to London"⁴

"... a visor for a visor" (Mercutio).⁵

I have argued elsewhere that Hegel's dialectic involves a spatial, stable moment (*das Bestehende*) and a moving, temporal moment (*das Vergehende*).⁶ The one turns into the other in a dialectical spiral toward more complete forms of consciousness and society. Whenever one side predominates, there is instability. This is the case, on the one hand, even if (where the side is spatiality) it looks like there is complete stability, or, on the other (where the side is temporality) it looks like a sequence without hindrance. Where one side predominates, the other side is near at hand, hidden within the predominate side as part of its essence.

When I speak of Henry V's unchangeableness, I mean, on the one hand, his apparent stability as king and as a royal will-power. This stability appears

in the shape of his virtue. But on the other hand, there is within his past and within his own psychology, the thieving, mercurial, and witty character of Falstaff and the characters at Eastcheap, as well as Hal's memories of participating in their exploits. That is the temporal character that lies within Hal and which he rejects in order to achieve his royal stability.

We saw previously that Richard II's time was changed into Bolingbroke's "Jack of the clock" and that that had become further destabilized with the new sub-lunar time of Jack Falstaff.⁷ By rejecting Falstaff and all that changeableness, Henry V thinks he is putting an end to this long history of temporal unrest. He thinks he has "redeemed time when men least thought he would."⁸

My argument in what follows is that this suppression of the temporal, changeable, and contingent is evil and ultimately untenable. In the process of exploring Hal's unchangeableness and its dependence on suppression, I look at how virtue and evil, as forms of consciousness, appear unchangeable, but really are not unchangeable. We will see in the coming chapters that virtue and evil, in Hegel's account of them, are each unstable. They are unstable because they are dialectically interdependent.⁹ In this chapter, we begin with virtue.

How Hal Came to Be "Unchangeable"

Hal Shared Falstaff's Wit and Therefore Had Sublated the Alienation of Will from which Richard II Suffered

Hal as Henry V has emerged from a series of kings who were struggling with and to keep the unchangeable, unquestionable character of their royal power. As we saw in Chapter 5, Richard II was alienated from his will: "for the concord of my state and time / [I] Had not an ear to hear my true time broke. / I wasted time, and now doth time waste me."¹⁰ His usurper, Bolingbroke (Hal's father) fared poorly for another reason. Though a willful man, he feared divine reprisal for the murder of Richard II. He believed that only a crusade would restore the crown's power.¹¹ Both men placed the redemption of time outside their own wills.

Hal is different. He takes it upon himself to redeem time through his own will. We see his plan early in *Henry IV* Part 1:

Prince Harry (Hal): "I know you all, and will a while uphold
The unyoked humour of your idleness
Yet herein will I imitate the sun,
Who doth permit the base contagious clouds
To smother up his beauty from the world,
That when he please again to be himself,
Being wanted he may be more wondered at

By breaking through the foul and ugly mists
 Of vapours that did seem to strangle him.
 If all the year were playing holidays,
 To sport would be as tedious as to work;
 But when they seldom come, they wished-for come,
 And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents.
 So when this loose behaviour I throw off
 And pay the debt I never promised,
 By so much shall I falsify men's hopes;
 And like bright metal on a sullen ground,
 My reformation, glitt'ring o'er my fault,
 Shall show more goodly and attract more eyes
 Than that which has no foil to set it off.
 I'll so offend to make offence a skill,
 Redeeming time when men think least I will."¹²

In *Henry IV* (Parts 1 and 2), Hal shows that he does not suffer from Richard II's or Bolingbroke's erroneous theories of causation. Like Falstaff, he knows that sovereign authority is subject to social interpretation and intervention. In other words, for him, there is no *de jure* authority, no "beyond" of idealized royal power, no hidden, final trumpet. Despite his repeated public nodding toward the will of God, he knows that events lie in his power to sway the multitude. Hal is not alienated from his will or his judgment. There is nothing of the Unhappy Consciousness that was present in Hamlet or Richard II. Hal is his own man because he knows how to counterfeit.

By the end of *Henry IV* Part 1, Hal has broken through the mirroring inversions.¹³ He affirms only his own counterfeiting will. He does so in part by getting rid of—robbing—the serious other, the "counterfeit" of himself. He kills his mirror image Harry Percy. In this, Hal is the ultimate thief: He *robs* Percy of his youth ("O Harry, thou hast robbed me of my youth"¹⁴).

Hal puts a stop to Percy's time. In doing so, he puts a stop to the whole shape of time that has been handed down to him from Richard II. For Percy's time contains Richard II's idea of his thoughts as people ("A generation of still-breeding thoughts; / And these same thoughts people this little world"¹⁵). Dying Percy lines it all up at Hal's feet: "Thoughts, the slaves of life, and life, time's fool, / And time, that takes survey of all the world, / Must have a stop."¹⁶

The shape that stops (with everything in it) is the time that surveys "all the world." This death of time is what Percy expresses to Hal. Hal's will appears to have caused the stoppage. Hal is positioned outside of time; he is the one that ends all times (for Percy). Later, Hal's rejection of Falstaff is likewise, in Falstaff's prophetic words, a banishing of "all the world." Instead of motivating time's changes (like Aristotle's unmoved mover), unchangeable Hal shows

himself to be capable of stopping time, its sub-lunar mirrorings, inversions, and changes. He thinks he is thereby redeeming time. But, as we will see, his timing is in fact a death knell.

Henry V's apparent self-command is evident in the soliloquy the night before the battle of Agincourt in *Henry V*.¹⁷ It is not like Richard II's existential anxiety over the emptiness of princely power. Rather, it concerns the labors of the king under the weight of the ceremonious show and the cares he must bare.¹⁸ He ends it with the perspective of the king who is above time: "The day, my friends and all things stay for me."¹⁹

What has allowed him to achieve this unchangeable power is, on the one hand, that he is like Falstaff. Hal recognizes the alienated character of cultural entities and he knows how to use them to his advantage. He knows how to disguise himself. Indeed he does so explicitly the night before the battle of Agincourt when he takes on the disguise of the soldier "Harry *le roy*."²⁰ On the other hand, Hal's "true" sovereign image is a mask for an unchanging, private end: namely, the unmovable continuance of his will to power (over his men, England, France, Katherine, etc.). His apparent kingly virtue makes his men compare him to ancient rulers of Empire.

Henry V, like Falstaff, knows that the counterfeit man is the one who stays alive and wins the day. The ugly side of this is that it is not just the day that he wants to win. Unlike Falstaff, he does not reflect his singularity into jolly excess. He will not lose his self. Behind the masks lies a self deeply committed to its own sovereignty. This makes his counterfeiting particularly pernicious.

Wit is the religion of the counterfeiter, the language that mediates the self and changeability, and Falstaff is that religion's greatest Priest. But Henry V is not wit's royal figurehead. Hal's secret sovereignty and his exterior image as virtuous king present an identity that is an evil. It is an advance over Falstaffian wit but it is also a falling away from something essential in it. From an embodied wit we have moved to a disembodied ego that thinks of itself as sovereign of "all the world." Let us investigate the nature of this complex development.

Henry V's Rejection of Wit at the End of *Henry IV* Part 2

The Rejection of Sub-Lunar Changeability

In order to assert his unchangeableness, Henry V (Hal) rejects the unstable world and fortune of the "men of the moon."²¹ Not only does he reject Falstaff on his coronation day (in *Henry IV* Part 2). During the campaign in France (in *Henry V*), Henry V has his erstwhile friend Bardolph hanged for thievery.

Bradley is right to point out that the rejection of Falstaff is foreshadowed in *Henry IV* Part 1. He rightly claims we should not be surprised.²² However,

Bradley does not focus on the fact that what is foreshadowed is Hal's rejection of *what is unstable*. Let us look at the scene from *Henry IV* Part 1 in which the foreshadowing occurs. In a conversation between Falstaff and Hal, Falstaff says:

Merry then, sweet wag, when thou art king let not us that are squires of the night's body be called thieves of the day's beauty. Let us be "Diana's foresters," "gentlemen of the shade, minions of the moon," and let men say we be men of good government, being governed, as the sea is, by our noble and chaste mistress the moon, under whose countenance we steal.²³

Hal replies:

Thou sayest well, and it holds well too, for the fortune of us that are the moon's men doth ebb and flow like the sea being governed as the sea is by the moon. As for proof now: a purse of gold most resolutely snatched on Monday night, and most dissolutely spent on Tuesday morning; got with swearing "lay by!," and spent with crying "bring in!"; now in as low an ebb as the foot of the ladder, and by and by in as high a flow as the ridge of the gallows.²⁴

Hal is clearly commenting on the changeability of these men. It is this, and not just the men, that he will reject.

Note in the passage that Hal identifies himself as one of the moon's men. In rejecting them, he will reject an embodiment of his self as counterfeiter and thief. This is key to understanding how his rejection is self-deception. We return to it later.

Some critics claim that Hal's rejection of Falstaff follows the pattern of medieval dramas, in which the character of Vice—the character who brings instability and wit into the play—is rejected or shown to fail in face of virtue.²⁵ I disagree. For as much as Falstaff is surely a Vice character (indeed he is called "that reverend Vice, that grey Iniquity"²⁶), Hal's rejection of him and his friends resounds far more deeply and pervasively than the medieval play's rejection of Vice.

With regard to the depth of Henry V's rejection of Falstaff, Stephen Greenblatt suggests that it might have biographical roots in a possible rejection by Shakespeare of Shakespeare's father, whose loss of social standing during Shakespeare's teens may have been due to excessive drinking.²⁷ Greenblatt teases us toward this conclusion by asking us to note the intensity in the words between Falstaff and Hal:

Falstaff: "God save thee, my sweet boy!"

King Harry: "My Lord Chief Justice, speak to that vain man."

Lord Chief Justice [to Falstaff]: "Have you your wits? Know you what 'tis you speak?"

Falstaff: "My king, my Jove, I speak to thee, my heart!"

Henry V: "I know thee not, old man. Fall to thy prayers.
How ill white hairs become a fool and jester!
I have long dreamt of such a kind of man,
So surfeit-swelled, so old, and so profane;
But being awake, I do despise my dream."²⁸

Of these words Greenblatt writes: "It is difficult to register the overwhelming power and pathos of the relationship between Hal and Falstaff without sensing some unusually intimate and personal energy."²⁹

But I find Greenblatt's reading questionable. (He admits that there is no historical evidence for it.) Granted, it is one of the most powerful scenes in all of Shakespeare's dramas, and it is not a simple rejection of the Vice character. But nor is the cool and distant character of Henry V a good stand-in for an unhappy son of John Shakespeare.

First of all, William Shakespeare is not at all like Henry V. Despite Shakespeare's distancing from his rural beginnings (see my Introduction), Shakespeare keeps the warmth of that past—its familiarity, beauty, and wit—intact in his plays. No such regard for the past is visible in the character of Henry V.

Secondly, Greenblatt's suggestion might work if we view the scene as an isolated fantasy of Shakespeare rejecting his father. But I prefer Hegel's repeated celebration of Shakespeare's ability to invest his characters with knowledge of their own identities and with an imagination sufficient to participate in the unraveling of their own fates. As we saw above, the fate of Falstaff and Henry V's relationship is already in their words from the start of *Henry IV* Part 1, with Falstaff's anxious and repeated question "Hal, when thou art king, wilt thou hang a thief?"

As for the all-pervasiveness of the rejection, we need only recall again Falstaff's words that in banishing Falstaff, one banishes "all the world."³⁰ Hal is systematically establishing himself outside the world. Let us revisit this idea.

The Rejection Establishes Henry V above the Sub-Lunar World of Change

Hal's rejection of the men of the moon means that Hal makes his crown a kind of transcendental power not subject to the contingencies of time and space. He

makes his being monumental. He becomes Apollonian. As one person describes him, he has "A largess universal, like the sun."³¹ His virtue is like that of the Greek Heroes, a return to the beautiful stability of a statue.

Hegel's account of classical sculpture likewise involves the rejection of wit:

... the sculptured figure must proceed throughout from the spirit of the thoughtful imagination which abstracts from all the accidents of the bodily form and spirit's subjective side, and which has no predilection for idiosyncrasies, or any feeling, pleasure, variety of impulses, or sallies of wit. For what is within the sculptor's reach for his supreme productions is, as we have seen, only spirit's body in what are the purely universal forms of the build and organization of the human figure; and his invention is limited partly to portraying the equally universal correspondence between inner and outer, and partly to giving an appearance to the individuality which, albeit unobtrusively, is accommodated to and interwoven with the universal substance.³²

Hegel goes on about the heroes of ancient Greece:

... in the beautiful days of Greece, men of action ... are great and free, grown independently on the soil of their own inherently substantial personality, self-made, and developing into what they [essentially] were and wanted to be. The Periclean age was especially rich in such characters ... all of them are out-and-out artists by nature, ideal artists shaping themselves, individuals of a single cast, works of art standing there like immortal and deathless images of the gods, in which there is nothing temporal and doomed.³³

Hal as Henry V postures in just this statuesque way (though it is an impossible position for him to hold convincingly, as we will see). Nor is Henry V trapped by being monumental, in the way that Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* is: Hal does not have wounds that he protects from the public eye. There is nothing in Hal to move him inwardly toward doubt or self-alienation. He is completely unchangeable. With that power, it is the outer world that appears as a swirl of contingencies which have no power over his will (or over his reign, at least in the time-span of the play).

By contrast, Falstaff, the man of the moon, dies "even at the turning of the tide."³⁴

Despite Henry V's historical grandeur, Falstaff has been more a part of time than Henry V could ever be. The reason for this lies in the role of wit. There is irony in the Lord Chief Justice's question to Falstaff "Have you

your wits?” For it is Hal who, by rejecting Falstaff, has lost his wits. What is involved in that loss?

Henry V remains self-reflective. But he is missing a kind of self-reflection that takes the other seriously.

We saw that this was also missing in Falstaff’s dealing with his troops in *Henry IV* Part 1. It might seem ironic and deserved if Falstaff’s affections for Hal were lost in the same vacuum of selfishness that led Falstaff to carelessly send his soldiers to their deaths. But even if Falstaff was cold-hearted to those anonymous men, Falstaff still had an attachment, a sense of loyalty, and an immediate affection for his friends.

By contrast, Hal as Henry V shows himself to be beyond *all* familiarity. For him, any immediacy is mere show that can be used to gain power. Bradley remarks that Falstaff has passion and Hal does not.³⁵ This needs qualification.³⁶ But one thing is for sure: Richard II and Falstaff do have love. Henry V and Bolingbroke do not.

We saw that with Richard II it was love (the social music) that “helped madmen to their wits.” It was Richard’s love that gave him the pathos that made him someone with whom we identified more than with Bolingbroke. In *Henry IV* Parts 1 and 2, it is also love, (Falstaff’s for Hal, and for life) that makes Falstaff the one with whom we identify. We identify with him more than with Bolingbroke’s son, Henry V. Let us therefore look briefly at the nature of Falstaff’s love.

Rejecting the Wit’s Passion.

Prince Harry [to Falstaff]: Sirrah, do I owe you a thousand pound?”

Falstaff: “A thousand pound, Hal? A million! Thy love is worth a million; thou owest me thy love.”³⁷

Falstaff [later, to crowned Henry V]: “My king, my Jove, I speak to thee, my heart!”³⁸

In “The Rejection of Falstaff,” Bradley argues that we do not see the rejection coming because Shakespeare, in creating Falstaff, overshot his intentions. Bradley argues that we cannot accept Hal’s rejection because Falstaff could not be reduced to something that we could reject.³⁹ Hegel’s discussion of Chivalric love in the *Aesthetics* can help us to understand the passion that destroys Falstaff even as it makes Falstaff one of literature’s most enduring characters.

We recall that, according to Hegel, Chivalry in the Romantic Form of Art is made up of Honor, Love, and Fidelity. I argued last chapter that Falstaff is a comic version only of the chivalric form of honor. With regard to love and fidelity, at least in relation to Hal, he is earnest.

It might be objected that Falstaff is not entirely earnest in his love of Hostess Quickly and Doll Tearsheet. This is true. But his love for the "sweet wag" Hal is of the romantic art form. Similarly, it is true that Falstaff hardly shows fidelity—at war he does what he likes and counterfeits to stay alive, and his fidelity to his friends consists in sharing drink, food and jokes. But in these respects, Hal's role is significant and reveals a deep commitment on Falstaff's part to Hal. For Poins' and Hal's attempts to trick and spy on Falstaff's *infidelities* are designed to give Falstaff a stage; they always reveal Falstaff as a counterfeiting genius and a man whom they and we cannot but love. Falstaff's fidelity toward Hal is profound partly because of their shared allegiance to these "counterfeiting" tricks and witty exchanges. Let us look first at love, then at fidelity.

LOVE

We have already discussed how Falstaff's fatness is a redeeming theater of the Spirit in which everyone finds his own wit. We can say of Falstaff's body what Hegel says of love: "it tugs everything into its sphere."⁴⁰ Something of Falstaff lies at the heart of society. The general shape of Falstaff's social heart (however undeveloped) is as important for our assessment of how Falstaff is better than Hal, as his love for Hal is. For now, let us look at Falstaff's love of the prince.

First, a clarification: Hegel writes of chivalric love in terms of "the surrender of the person to an individual of the opposite sex."⁴¹ I do not wish to enter into speculations about sexual love between Falstaff and Hal. Hegel's account of chivalric love can be applied whether sex has been had or not, and whether it is between opposite sexes or not. We can take Hegel's conception of chivalric love out of its historical "bed" without losing the phenomenological truth about it. The fact is that Falstaff loves Hal in a way that causes a fatal collision for Falstaff. Hegel's description of love and its collisions in the section on Chivalry is therefore apt.

According to Hegel, love is already implicit in honor "because honour needs to see itself recognized, and the infinity of the person accepted, in another person."⁴² Falstaff rejects culturally recognized honor. But we can read Falstaff's question to Hal "will you hang a thief" as his search for Hal's honoring of and recognition of Falstaff's world of "nightly stealing." When all that the sun shines on is corrupt, there is some honor in being a thief. It is not the cultural entity "honor" that Falstaff is heralding. This is an honor that only the witty comprehend.

Falstaff believes Hal to be a man of the moon and therefore someone who does recognize Falstaff's world. However, Falstaff asks Hal repeatedly about whether, as king, he'll hang a thief. This repetition could be insecurity about Hal's fidelity. But it could also be Falstaff's effort to form Hal's character. After all, Falstaff is—or at least takes himself to be—a paternal figure for Hal.

Hegel explains that the recognition in love

is only genuine and total when my personality is not respected by others merely in *abstracto* or in a concrete separate and therefore restricted instance, but when with my whole subjective personality—with all that it is and contains—I penetrate the consciousness of another as this individual as I was, am, and will be, and constitute the other's real willing and knowing, striving and possessing.⁴³

The surest confirmation of Falstaff's and Hal's love for each other is in their jests. Falstaff takes Hal's witty bantering as an expression of his recognition of and affection for the "minions of the moon."

For Falstaff, everything is at stake in this recognition because he loves Hal. Falstaff is not Falstaff without Hal. The following description of love by Hegel could well be a description of the kind of self-release and self-discovery expressed in their witty exchanges. It could also serve as a description of the love of wit itself:

What constitutes the infinity of love is this losing, in the other, one's consciousness of self, this splendour of disinterestedness and selflessness through which alone the person finds himself again and becomes a self, this self-forgetfulness in the roots of his being in another, and yet in this other does entirely enjoy precisely himself; and beauty is chiefly to be sought in the fact that this emotion does not remain mere impulse and emotion but that imagination builds its whole world up into this relation; everything else which by way of interests, circumstances, and aims belongs otherwise to actual being and life, it elevates into an adornment of this emotion; it tugs everything into this sphere and assigns a value to it only in its relation thereto.⁴⁴

But this is dangerous territory. For this honor and love appear in the night, in mirror-reflections, double entredres and counterfeitings. The kingdom of crimes is unstable: subject to the ebb and flow of the tide, which, as Hal points out, is not far from the rise to and fall from the gallows. It is not just dangerous because Hal as Henry V might indeed hang a thief. It is epistemologically and emotionally dangerous because it is hard in this night to tell whether recognition is genuine. This is especially the case when the recognition

is based on the idea that "honesty" is a sham. Falstaff should worry that Hal will indeed prove "a false thief."⁴⁵

The fact is, however, that Falstaff's entire personality is tied up in Hal's recognition of him. So when Hal says "I know thee not, old man," the effect is devastating. Falstaff's world crumbles. It is not just that Falstaff is not going to be rich and powerful, it is that he is rejected by someone in whom he had placed his world.

It could be argued that Falstaff does not love Hal *that* much. On the battlefield in *Henry IV*, Hal rebukes Falstaff's jest of offering sack instead of a sword, and Falstaff does not take that rebuke hard at all. Indeed in *Henry IV* Part 2, we get such a jolly defense of sack that we might think sack to be Falstaff's only love. He begins his speech by rebuking Prince John (who has just left the scene).

I would you had but the wit; 'twere better than your dukedome. Good faith, this same young sober-blooded boy doth not love me, nor a man cannot make him laugh. But that's no marvel; he drinks no wine. There's never none of these demure boys come to any proof; for thin drink doth so overcool their blood, and making many fish meals, that they fall into a kind of male green-sickness; and then when they marry, they get wenches. They are generally fools and cowards—which some of us should be too, but for inflammation. A good sherry-sack hath a two-fold operation in it. It ascends me into the brain, dries me there all the foolish and dull and crudy vapours which environ it, makes it apprehensive, quick, forgetive, full of nimble, fiery, and delectable shapes, which, delivered o'er to the voice, the tongue, which is the birth, becomes excellent wit. The second property of your excellent sherry is the warming of the blood, which, before cold and settled, left the liver white and pale, which is the badge of pusillanimity and cowardice. But the sherry warms, and makes it course from the inwards to the parts' extremes; it illuminateth the face, which, as a beacon, gives warning to all the rest of this little kingdom, man, to arm; and then the vital commoners and inland petty spirits muster me all to their captain, the heart; who, great and puffed up with his retinue, doth any deed of courage. And this valour comes of sherry. So that skill in the weapon is nothing without sack, for that sets it a-work; and learning a mere hoard of gold kept by a devil, till sack commences it and sets it in act and use. Hereof comes it that Prince Harry is valiant; for the cold blood he did naturally inherit of his father he hath, like lean, sterile, and bare land, manured, husbanded, and tilled, with excellent endeavour of drinking good, and good store of fertile sherry, that he is become very hot and valiant. If I had a thousand

sons, the first human principle I would teach them should be to forswear thin potations, and to addict themselves to sack.⁴⁶

For all his love of drink, however, Falstaff's true love is Hal. If it were not, he would not have died of grief at Hal's rejection of him.

Falstaff is doomed in his love. In the section on "Love's Collisions," Hegel writes that "mundane interests" are divided into two spheres: the sphere of "the objective world as such, family life, political ties, citizenship, laws, *droit*, ethics, etc.," and the sphere of the subjective love that "burgeons in noble and fiery hearts."⁴⁷ The latter easily comes to naught when it collides with the former. For when the heart

makes itself alone into the essential and even the sole or supreme business of life, not merely can it decide to sacrifice everything else and fly with the beloved into a desert, but in its extreme, where indeed it is unbeautiful, it proceeds to the unfree, slavish, and shameless sacrifice of the dignity of man.⁴⁸

We see this in Falstaff's sweating and breathless race to Hal's coronation. Echoing Bradley but for a different reason, we should have seen Falstaff's fall coming. As Hegel explains, "owing to this diremption [of spheres,] the aims of love cannot be achieved in concrete reality without collisions, because the other relations of life assert their demands and rights apart from love and may therefore impair the sole dominion of the passion of love."⁴⁹ The diremption of the spheres is the general basis of the collision between Falstaff's hearty wit and the world of politics. The collision that does Falstaff in is the one his heart encounters when Hal becomes king.⁵⁰

Finally, we can say of Falstaff's love for Hal what Hegel writes of romantic love: it lacks "absolute universality."

It is only the *personal* feeling of the individual subject, and it is obviously not filled with the eternal interests and objective content of human existence, with family, political ends, country, duties arising from one's calling or class, with freedom and religious feeling, but only with its own self, the self that wishes to receive again the feeling that is reflected back from another self.⁵¹

In the end, Falstaff's love and fidelity fall short because of the nature of romantic chivalry. Hegel explains:

At all these stages, Honour, Love, and Fidelity, the basis is the independence of the subject in himself, the heart which yet always opens itself to wider and richer interests and in them remains rec-

onciled with itself. . . . The mundane sphere of love, honour, and fidelity . . . bring before our eyes only the earliest movement of the heart in its inner mundane subjective life. Yet what is still lacking at this present stage is the filling of this inwardness with the concrete content of human relations, characters, passions, and real existence in general. In contrast to this variety, the inherently infinite heart remains still abstract and formal. . . .⁵²

As much as Hegel's account of the Romantic form of chivalric love accounts for Falstaff's fate, we must ask two questions: Does the division of the spheres serve to *justify* Hal's rejection of Falstaff? And is there really nothing universal in Falstaff's love?

Hegel argues that, viewed from the outside, a person's choice of love seems capricious, since everyone has the paragon of love who is their "one and only," yet each "one and only" is different. Hegel writes that "this [capriciousness and contingency—JB] remains the aspect of coldness which freezes us despite all the heat of passion in its presentation."⁵³ But we are not frozen by Falstaff's love. In his witty banter with Hal at Eastcheap, we find something of real worth. The love that Falstaff and Hal express through their wit has something in it that kindles the heart. And it is not sack. There *is* something important, indeed universal in Falstaff's cry "My king, my Jove, I speak to thee, my heart!"⁵⁴ And it is something which Hal loses when he scorns Falstaff's love. Over the next chapters, we will develop what this is. Let us begin with a look at the third form of Romantic Chivalry.⁵⁵

FIDELITY

According to Hegel, love has to do with equals. I have been arguing that, in the terms of wit, Hal and Falstaff were equals. Fidelity, however, involves a superior rank or master.⁵⁶ Fidelity is nonetheless based on the individual's subjective choice. Hegel's example is Kent's relationship to Lear in *King Lear*. After he is banished, Kent chooses to disguise himself in order to continue to serve the wayward king; Kent is loyal to the extreme. But even in this extreme loyalty, the inferior-ranked individual "preserves his free self-dependence throughout as his preponderating characteristic."

Alongside subjective self-dependence goes something else of even greater importance. Hegel writes that "this fidelity is so lofty a principle in chivalry because on it depends the chief bond of a community's connection and its social organization, at least when that is originating."⁵⁷

Falstaff chooses Hal as the superior person toward whom he shows fidelity. In Falstaff, there is also the "chief bond of a community's connection" (even if his is a beginning stage of such a bond). Does Henry V show fidelity? More importantly, does he exhibit this bond of community?

One could argue to the contrary that it is in Hal, and in particular, in Hal's rejection of Falstaff, that we find the true forms of chivalric honor, love, and fidelity: Loyal to the crown which he inherits, he rejects his subjective interests.⁵⁸ Just as Hal destroyed the "mirror Harry" (Percy), as King, Hal must destroy the mirror lineage of his mirror-father Falstaff. There can be no ambiguity in Hal's fidelity. He must choose between the kingdom of the sun and that of the night. He chooses the sun.

Furthermore, one could argue, Henry V expresses not just fidelity to his kingship. His speech to rally his beleaguered forces "on St. Crispin's Day" is a resounding echo of and invitation to others to feel fidelity toward the crown. It is a hugely successful speech. Henry V expresses the "chief bond" of the community's connection even more powerfully than Falstaff.

But these arguments fail when we press the question: To whom is Henry V *really* expressing fidelity? I argue below that it is not to his father and the crown, but to his own ego. Both Falstaff and Hal, like Hegel's description of the man of honor in the Middle Ages, follow their "own caprice."⁵⁹ But Hal's universality—patriotism—is hollow without Falstaff's embodied witty spirit.

Falstaff's passion (his love of Hal) is what makes the difference in their forms of fidelity. Hal is policy and patriotism; Falstaff is subjective heart. Falstaff's form of bonding, though still in its infancy, has the potential for something grand. Henry V's grandiosity lacks heart. Henry V's chivalry is not enough to justify his brutal rejections of those to whom he had expressed fidelity.

CONCLUSION

In contrast with the intense playfulness, familiarity, love, and fidelity of Falstaff's wit, Hal as Henry V is an unchangeable will to power. His behavior is a return to a one-sided show, albeit at a more advanced level than Richard II or Bolingbroke. Hal steps away from wit into an abstracted form of power that appears to be unmovable. The temporal, contingent side is rendered inessential: The dying Falstaff, the marching soldiers, the thieves who must be hanged—these are the contingencies of life that cannot catch his conscience. Even Scroop's treason, about which Hal waxes on as being like a second fall of man,⁶⁰ settles upon the stage like a ball into a socket—all is put right by "King Harry" the virtuous leader.

Part II. Henry's Honor and His Posture of Virtue

Henry V's Honorable Rebuke of France's Jest

In the play *Henry V*, Hal is Henry V (also referred to as King Harry). Henry V continues rejecting wit. The stakes are even higher now. In place of Falstaff, the Dauphin of France is now the joker who must be rejected.

At the start of *Henry V*, the Dauphin makes an insulting jest. He invokes Henry V's wanton youthfulness and changeability by giving him a gift of tennis balls. Henry V replies vehemently. His speech begins with witty double entendres but ends with a forceful repudiation of wit:

Henry V: "We are glad the Dauphin is so pleasant with us.
His present and your pains we thank you for.
When we have matched our rackets to these balls,
We will in France, by God's grace, play a set
Shall strike his father's crown into the hazard.
Tell him he hath made a match with such a wrangler
That all the courts of France will be disturbed
With chases. And we understand him well,
How he comes o'er us with our wilder days,
Not measuring what use we made of them.
We never valued this poor seat of England,
And therefore, living hence, did give ourself
To barbarous licence—as 'tis ever common
That men are merriest when they are from home.
But tell the Dauphin I will keep my state,
Be like a king, and show my sail of greatness
When I do rouse me in my throne of France.
For that have I laid by my majesty
And plodded like a man for working days,
But I will rise there with so full a glory
That I will dazzle all the eyes of France,
Yea strike the Dauphin blind to look on us.
And tell the pleasant Prince this mock of his
Hath turned his balls to gunstones, and his soul
Shall stand sore charged for the wasteful vengeance
That shall fly from them—for many a thousand widows
Shall this his mock mock out of their dear husbands,
Mock mothers from their sons, mock castles down;
Ay, some are yet ungotten and unborn
That shall have cause to curse the Dauphin's scorn.
But this lies all within the will of God,
To whom I do appeal, and in whose name
Tell you the Dauphin I am coming on
To venge me as I may, and to put forth
My rightful hand in a well-hallowed cause.
So get you hence in peace. And tell the Dauphin
His jest will savour but of shallow wit
When thousands weep more than did laugh at it."⁶¹

Henry V's response translates the Dauphin's jest into a point of honor. Henry knows (no doubt from Falstaff) that honor is what you make it; he knows that (in Hegel's language) it is an infinite point of reflection into oneself that can be balanced on the most insignificant of things. This knowledge makes Henry able to use this infinite point to his advantage. He turns this point of honor into the birth of an international event. Just as he had stopped Falstaff's and Percy's wayward times, he now sets out to stop France from marching to its own rhythm. Now his timing is a death knell for thousands.

After his rebuke of the Dauphin, the platform of virtue is established for the remainder of the play. The English are henceforth the "noble" side and France is the "wit" that must be suppressed. Shakespeare sets the scene: The night before the battle of Agincourt,⁶² the dialogue of the French is all wit and jest, while on the English side of the battle front, we hear one of the most famous and noble call to arms in the history of English literature. I will return to the French dialogue in a moment. Let us first dwell on the pathos in Henry V's address to his troops:

... if it be a sin to covet honour
 I am the most offending soul alive.
 No, faith, my coz, wish not a man from England.
 God's peace, I would not lose so great an honour
 As one man more methinks would share from me
 For the best hope I have. O do not wish one more.
 Rather proclaim it presently through my host
 That he which hath no stomach to this fight,
 Let him depart. His passport shall be made
 And crowns for convoy put into his purse.
 We would not die in that man's company
 That fears his fellowship to die with us.
 This day is called the Feast of Crispin.
 He that outlives this day and comes safe home
 Will stand a-tiptoe when this day is named
 And rouse him at the name of Crispin.
 He that shall see this day and live t'old age
 Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours
 And say, "tomorrow is Saint Crispin."
 Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars
 And say, "These wounds I had on Crispin's day."
 Old men forget; yet all shall be forgot,
 But he'll remember, with advantages,
 What feats he did that day. Then shall our names,
 Familiar in his mouth as household words—

Harry the King, Bedford and Exeter,
 Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester—
 Be in their flowing cups freshly remembered.
 This story shall the good man teach his son,
 And Crispin shall ne'er go by
 From this day to the ending of the world
 But we in it shall be remembered,
 We few, we happy few, we band of brothers.
 For he today that sheds his blood with me
 Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,
 This day shall gentle his condition.
 And gentlemen in England now abed
 Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
 And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
 That fought with us on Saint Crispin's day.⁶³

The heroism of this day is to be remembered "from this day to the ending of the world." Time seems indeed to be redeemed: it is redeemed as the memory of Saint Crispin's day. Universal brotherhood appears to have been achieved.

In the character of Henry V, princely heroism returns in full force. Shakespeare even introduces a Chorus to sing of Henry's virtues.⁶⁴ The French are made to remark on "how terrible in constant resolution" Henry V is.⁶⁵ It appears that Henry V succeeds where his predecessors failed. We must see how and why his virtue—remarkable in shape—is nonetheless, in his time, a façade.

Virtue in the Play

Harold Bloom remarks that Shakespeare's play *Henry V* is pageantry.⁶⁶ Falstaff is dead and Hal is a king at war. On the one hand, we are engaged in a show of force, of royal capacity, a show of the crown in control. On the other hand, we are invited to consider the unruly elements: soldiers who might get out of control, pillaging thieves, nationalist antagonisms, and the disarray of war. These contingencies appear to be managed by Henry V's unwavering will. He appears to be the seat of virtue. At the gates of Harfleur in France, it appears that he alone can unleash or hold back the destructive and wanton fury of raging soldiers. He threatens the Governor of the town:

Defy us to our worst. . . .
 (. . .)
 I will not leave the half-achievèd Harfleur
 Till in her ashes she lie buried.
 The gates of mercy shall be all shut up,

And the fleshed soldier, rough and hard of heart,
 In liberty of bloody hand shall range
 With conscience wide as hell, mowing like grass
 Your fresh fair virgins and your flow'ring infants.
 What is it then to me if impious war
 Arrayed in flames like the prince of fiends
 Do with his smirched complexion all fell feats
 Enlinked to waste and desolation?
 What is't to me, when you yourselves are cause,
 If your pure maidens fall into the hand
 Of hot and forcing violation?
 What rein can hold licentious wickedness
 When down the hill he holds his fierce career?
 We may as bootless spend our vain command
 Upon th'enragèd soldiers in their spoil
 As send precepts to the leviathan
 To come ashore. Therefore, you men of Harfleur,
 Take pity of your town and of your people
 Whiles yet my soldiers are in my command,
 Whiles yet the cool and temperate wind of grace
 O'erblows the filthy and contagious clouds
 Of heady murder, spoil and villainy.
 (...)

What say you? Will you yield, and this avoid?
 Or, guilty in defence, be thus destroyed?⁶⁷

King Harry is the cause of grace. If Harfleur falls prey to violent contingency (evoked in the shape of the sea's monster, Leviathan), it is because they did not beg him to hold his soldiers back.

But it is not just King Harry who sets the tone of virtue in the play. It is everywhere extolled in *Henry V*. It is as if a life of virtue were the play's subtext and a repetition of the rejection of Falstaff. See for example the boy who rejects Pistol, Bardolph and Nim:

Boy: "Nim and Bardolph are sworn brothers in filching. . . . They would have me as familiar with men's pockets as their gloves or their handkerchiefs—which makes much against my manhood, if I should take from another's pocket to put into mine, for it is plain pocketing up of wrongs. I must leave them, and seek some better service. Their villainy goes against my weak stomach, and therefore I must cast it up."⁶⁸

Virtues are celebrated everywhere in the play. The campaign to France is cast in its colours: "Now thrive the armourers, and honour's thought / Reigns solely in the breasts of men."⁶⁹ It is frequently connected with ancient figures. Fluellen says:

The Duke of Exeter is as magnanimous as Agamemnon, and a man that I love and honour with my soul and my heart and my duty and my live and my living and my uttermost power. He . . . keeps the bridge most valiantly, with excellent discipline. There is an ensign lieutenant there at the pridge, I think in my very conscience he is as valiant a man as Mark Antony, and he is a man of no estimation in the world, but I did see him do as gallant service.⁷⁰

Sentences abound in which virtue is extolled: "Advantage [circumspection—ed.] is a better soldier than rashness."⁷¹ More sadly, when Henry V has Bardolph hanged, Henry V capitalizes on it to make a point about virtue: "We would have all such offenders so cut off . . . nothing taken but paid for, none of the French upbraided or abused in disdainful language. For when lenity and cruelty play for a kingdom, the gentler gamester is the soonest winner."⁷²

The best description of virtue in the play is also a wink from Shakespeare that all this talk of virtue is a show. It is the speech made by the French Bourbon (the Dauphin) in praise of his horse. We cannot but take this as Shakespeare's implicit send up of his character Henry V.

Bourbon: "I will not change my horse with any that treads but on four pasterns. Ah ha! He bounds from the earth as if his entrails were hares . . . the Pegasus, *qui a les narine de feu*! When I bestride him, I soar, I am a hawk; he trots the air, the earth sings when he touches it, the best horn of his hoof is more musical than the pipe to Hermes. . . . It is a beast for Perseus. He is pure air and fire, and the dull elements of earth and water never appear in him, but only in patient stillness while his rider mounts him. He is indeed a horse, and all other jades you may call beasts. . . . It is the prince of palfreys. His neigh is the bidding of a monarch, and his countenance enforces homage."

Orléans: "No more, cousin."

Bourbon: "Nay, the man hath no wit, that cannot from the rising of the lark to the lodging of the lamb vary deserved praise on my palfrey. It is a theme as fluent as the sea. Turn the sands into eloquent

tongues, and my horse is argument for them all. 'Tis a subject for a sovereign to reason on, and for a sovereign's sovereign to ride on, and for the world, familiar to us and unknown, to lay apart their particular functions, and wonder at him. . . ."⁷³

In order to see why Henry's virtue is a throwback and a sham, let us look at Hegel's argument about the nature of virtue, about why the only appropriate historical period for virtue is the ancient world of Greek and Roman heroes, and about how the modern world requires something else altogether.

Part III. Hegel's Concept of Virtue⁷⁴ and a Reassessment of Henry V

In General, Hegel's Concept of Virtue Is Aristotelian: Virtue Is a Mean

It is doing the right thing in the right circumstance, to the right degree. Virtue, Hegel argues, belongs to the ancient world. This provides a counterbalance to his recent predecessor, Kant.⁷⁵ In the modern world, something other than virtue is called for.⁷⁶ Let us look at Hegel's argument.

For Hegel, virtue is "the ethical insofar as it is reflected in the individual character determined through nature."⁷⁷ Nature here means: the natural social sphere and the embodied individual. With regard to the first, Hegel thinks that the natural social sphere which allows virtue to take shape is best exemplified by the ancient world of heroes. As Wood explains:

Strictly speaking . . . virtue is not Hegel's ideal for modern ethical life. Hegel associates virtue (*Tugend*) with an earlier age, when the social order was less fully organized, and the ethical had to triumph through "ethical virtuosity" (*Virtuosität*)—the special ethical genius of individuals, such as Herakles and other heroes of ancient Greece.⁷⁸

With regard to nature as the embodied individual, Hegel, like Aristotle, thinks of virtue as a kind of embodied intelligence: "A virtue is a disposition (*Gesinnung*), trait (*hexis*), or habit (*ethos*). . . . Virtues are *intelligent* dispositions, dispositions to act for certain reasons, to be pleased or pained at certain things, to feel certain emotions."⁷⁹

According to Hegel, virtue is the work of an ancient hero's will in an ethical system that is not yet rational. Virtuous action is therefore often "compatible with a good deal of what we would consider immoral or even barbarous conduct."⁸⁰

For example, let us look at Brutus's murder of Caesar. At the end of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, Mark Anthony extols Brutus' honor. He declares that Caesar's murder was a barbaric act but that Brutus' participation in it was nonetheless noble. Unlike the other conspirators who murdered Caesar out of envy, Brutus alone slew Caesar for the common good of Rome: "This was the noblest Roman of them all. / All the conspirators save only he / Did that they did in envy of great Caesar. / He only in a general honest thought / And in common good to all made one of them."⁸¹

This is consistent with what Hegel writes about ancient heroic virtue:

The Greek heroes step forth in a pre-legal age, or they are themselves the founders of states, so that right and social order, law and custom (*Sitte*), proceed from them, and actualize themselves as their individual work, remaining connected to them. In this way Hercules was praised by the ancients themselves, and stands there as an ideal of original heroic virtue. His free and self-dependent virtue, in which he championed the right and battled against the monstrosities of men and nature, is not the universal condition of the age, but belongs exclusively and properly to him.⁸²

In Hegel's account, virtue cannot complete the job of making us ethical citizens. This is because virtue belongs to pre-rational states that have not developed conscientiousness.⁸³ What is needed in the modern world is not virtue, but "rectitude." Wood summarizes Hegel: in "modern society . . . the ethical life of individuals is articulated into an organic whole composed of determinate roles, positions, or estates (*Stände*). Each position has its own determinate duties and ethical disposition."⁸⁴ Hegel writes that "[w]hen virtue displays itself solely as the individual's simple conformity with the duties of the station to which he belongs, it is rectitude" (*Rechtschaffenheit*).⁸⁵

In other words, rather than the private will of the hero, "[i]n a rational social order, virtue consists rather in perfecting myself in my particular vocation, bringing my character into conformity with the demands of my special position in society. For it is this that constitutes my real particularity."⁸⁶

With Hegel's account of virtue in mind, let us reassess Henry V.

Henry V's Virtue Is But a Show

At the start of the play, the campaign against France is pure posturing. In Act 1 Scene 2, Shakespeare makes a comedy of the Archbishop's attempt to provide a rational, historical justification for the invasion of France.⁸⁷ The Archbishop had, in the previous scene, privately declared his real reason for encouraging

the campaign: He desired to see his coffers kept full. Henry V declares that he wants to proceed into the war with "right and conscience."⁸⁸ The Bishop's babbling justifications about lineage and Henry's rightful ascent to the throne of France satisfy Henry's request; Henry then makes quick work of the Dauphin's insult and immediately sets off on his bloody campaign. The legitimacy of his campaign and Henry's sense of right and conscience are mockeries of justice.

It is not possible for Henry to act with rectitude since his natural social sphere has not developed to that degree of reason. But neither can he put on the virtue of the ancients: With Richard II and then Falstaff, we have passed through the alienation of ancient virtue; indeed, we have come out the witty end of it. One would think that Shakespeare's audience, like modern society, "cannot help but view the ancient ideal of heroic virtue as something naïve, immature—in the end, ridiculous."⁸⁹

In the *Aesthetics*, Hegel cites Falstaff alongside Don Quixote as the kind of witty character that dissolves Romantic art. We have seen how wit undoes honest virtue. After Falstaff, no Shakespearean audience can go back to the ridiculousness of mere virtue. Henry is putting on a *show* of virtue.

The Absence of Conscience

Our discussion of Hegel's theory of virtue has brought us an important distinction: the difference between ancient virtue and modern ethics is the presence of conscience. What shocks us in Henry's actions toward his erstwhile friends is that he appears to have no conscience. He rejects Falstaff, hangs Bardolph, and takes his country into a senseless war. The gimmick that is supposed to prevent our shock is his virtue. But that gimmick does not work. We have argued here why his virtue is a sham. So the question now is: Where is Henry V's conscience?

For example, why didn't Henry V pardon Falstaff and Bardolph, or publicly repudiate them and then, through back doors, let them know that it was a show for the public?⁹⁰ And if that was not possible, why was there no evidence of a conflict within Hal; why not the slightest remorse or pang of conscience?⁹¹

There is another way to view Henry V. He is not virtuously barbaric: He is evil.

Evil is a more modern concept than heroic virtue. As we will see next chapter, Hegel asserts that evil is a topic in modern art, not ancient art. Part of evil's modern character is that it involves the individual will in the "quest for purely personal ends" at the expense of the common good.

To fully flesh out Hal's evil, we must turn to Hegel's account of evil in art and in society. This will involve us in further developments of the negative infinite judgment as well as an analysis of the relationship between evil,

conscience, the good, and hypocrisy. We will thereby come to see the ways in which Henry V's moral imagination is flawed.

Before we do, let us deal with one final query.

Part IV. Who Has Limited (His) Wits: Hal or Shakespeare?

It might be argued that Hal's limitations are Shakespeare's, not Hal's; that Shakespeare's time in history is responsible for this series of kings not developing past Renaissance notions of will and power. Tylliard's idea of an "Elizabethan world picture" supports the idea that Shakespeare was simply not in a historical position to develop Hal into what Hegel would call a more developed Objective Spirit. In this view, Hal simply did what was required of a ruler of the time, and in this respect, Hal shows no failure of moral imagination. The imagination of the character Henry V was constrained by the historical period in which Shakespeare was writing.

I think otherwise. The argument that Shakespeare could not make Hal do otherwise is clearly untrue when we consider that *Hamlet* was written the same year as *Henry V* (1599). Hamlet has a modern conscience and complexity that fascinated Hegel's contemporaries.

Second, Hegel thinks of Shakespeare as a modern writer. For example, he uses Shakespeare as an example of modern poetry: "The same is true of modern poetry also. Shakespeare, e.g., is very metaphorical in his diction."⁹²

Third, if we want to find a heroically virtuous character free from the fetters of modernity, we should look to Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, not *Henry V*. *Julius Caesar* was written the same year as *Henry V* and *Hamlet*. In the characters of Caesar and Brutus, Shakespeare amply develops ancient heroic characters, characters that were not burdened by the modern problems of sovereign self-development which we know burdened and shaped Shakespeare's Henry V. Julius Caesar is more genuinely unchangeable: Indeed, he declares himself to be the Unchangeable Northern Star;⁹³ and that play as a whole celebrates the monumental honor of Brutus. But Shakespeare's Brutus is not a character with a personal history like Hal's or a background of forefathers like Hal's; Shakespeare's Brutus is not someone who exhibits the advances that Hal has made over previous kings, not someone indebted to a wit like Falstaff's.

In conclusion, Hal's rejection of Falstaff is not the noble behavior of a Brutus. There is a history of sovereign self-consciousness here from which Hal's moral imagination has become alienated. In *that* phenomenological history, Hal has a distinctive, *modern* character. For this reason, he must be held accountable for his rejection of wit and his return to pre-modern virtue. There *is* a failure of moral imagination in Hal.

A final note about Shakespeare's reasons for limiting Hal's development. The year Henry V was written (1599), there was a censure against satire for political reasons. This "Bishop's Ban" led to book burnings, and many authors "were forced to abandon works in progress."⁹⁴ Shapiro reports on the effects as follows:

Not even London's dramatists escaped the ban, which also decreed that "no plays [were to] be printed except they be allowed by such as have authority." Left unexplained was exactly why some works were called in and others spared. The ambiguity, perhaps deliberate, had a chilling effect. . . .

Shakespeare hadn't had any of his works banned, but even he was singled by the flames. Neither the popular *Richard the Second* nor the *First Part of Henry the Fourth* were published again during Elizabeth's lifetime. The Chamberlain's Men took extra precautions with his two other works on the hypersensitive Lancastrian reign: both the *Second Part of Henry the Fourth* and *Henry the Fifth* were sanitized and seen into print far more quickly than any other plays Shakespeare wrote before or after.⁹⁵

I must leave the details of this to the historians.⁹⁶ But I will say the following: The ambiguous and alienating political landscape that caused the sanitizing of the plays supports my argument about Henry V's character and *Henry V* the play. In other words, if both the character and play reflect the actual political landscape of that year in Shakespeare's life, then sovereign hypocrisy was being covered over by virtue and the social "plays" were pure pageantry. If one digs deeply (into history or the play), the message becomes clear. The task of Shakespeare's audience (at any time) is not only to remember the developments in Henry V's past, but also any recent developments in sovereign selfhood that have led to "sanitizing" in the name of unchangeable virtue.

Chapter 8

Hegel's Theory of Crime and Evil

(Re)tracing the Rights of the Sovereign Self

Introduction

This is the second chapter in our argument about Henry V's character. Last chapter we looked at his ostensible virtue. This chapter we look at Hegel's theory of evil. Next chapter, we look at various kinds of princely evil in order to nail down just what sort of evil Henry V's character exhibits. Then, in Chapter 10, we will be able to resolve our questions about whether an absolute justice is possible and what it must involve.

We begin with a look at Hegel's account of evil in art. Hegel contrasts ancient with modern. He prefers the ancients, but he nonetheless holds Shakespeare to be exceptional because of Shakespeare's ability to portray evil.

Then we enter the main argument of the chapter. Hegel holds that evil is a product of the movement of *Aufhebung*. Rather than giving rise to ghostly contradictions or succumbing to an inner oracle that has no ear for the social clock, evil is a shape of sovereign self-certainty that reigns over contradictions precisely by tuning in to the times and rising above them. The reign of evil is based on the particularity of the individual and his aims and is therefore unjust.

We begin the main argument with Hegel's account of the general dialectical shape of evil. We look at his account of the role of crime and evil and in the development of the State. Then we look at the nature and psychology of evil in Hegel's theory, focusing on its sundering (*aufhebende*) character. According to Hegel, evil is a product of the movement of the dialectic in the sphere of morality. It is one that must ultimately be overcome if there is to be a properly rational social dialectic.

Finally, with all this in mind, we retrace the shapes of Sovereign self that we have been investigating in the History plays.

Part I. Hegel's View of Evil in Art¹

Evil Is Worthless Unless in Greatness of Character; Greek Drama Is More Substantial in Its Collisions

Hegel's view in the *Aesthetics* is that "evil is in general inherently cold and worthless, because nothing comes of it except what is purely negative, just destruction and misfortune, whereas genuine art should give us a view of an inner harmony."² Hegel asserts that it is better tolerated if it is "elevated and carried by an intrinsically worthy greatness of character and aim, but evil as such, envy, cowardice, and baseness are and remain purely repugnant."³

Hegel repeatedly contrasts Greek and the German Romantic Art (not Hegel's Romantic Art Form but the ironic kind he dislikes) on the topic of evil. There is substance in the ills and sorrows of the ancient Greek dramas but not in the modern romantic ones. Modern dramas wallow in abstract evil. In Greek tragedy, "the occasion for collisions is produced by the moral justification of a specific act, and not at all by an evil will, a crime, or infamy, or by mere misfortune, blindness, and the like. For evil in the abstract has no truth in itself and is of no interest."⁴

According to Hegel, the collisions in Greek drama are of "equally justified powers and individuals."⁵ When horrible actions are performed in ancient art there is no romantic celebration of them. "[T]he harshness, wickedness infamy, and hideousness which gain a place in romantic art remain altogether foreign to classical." Instead, there is a kind of social rationale for what happens: Horrible actions "partly commanded and defended by the gods . . . are every time represented one way or another as possessed of an actually immanent justification."⁶

Shakespeare Is an Exception. He Interests Us Even in Vulgar Clouts and Fools

For Hegel, Shakespeare has a particular excellence that is absent in most Romantic artists. He points to Shakespeare's *King Lear* as an example: "The great poets and artists of antiquity . . . do not give us the spectacle of wickedness and depravity. Shakespeare, on the other hand, in *Lear*, for example, brings evil before us in its entire dreadfulness."⁷ As we have seen, Hegel writes that Shakespeare portrays, "on the infinite breadth of his 'world-stage' the extremes of evil and folly," investing his characters with such imagination that "he makes them free artists of their own selves, and thereby, with his strongly marked and

faithful characterization, [Shakespeare] can interest us not only in criminals but even in the most downright and vulgar clouts and fools.”⁸

In Hegel's Romantic Art Form, Evil Characters, Through the Firmness of Their Characters, Overcome Obstacles and Precipitate Their Own Downfall; Here too Shakespeare Excels

In his discussion within the Romantic Art form of “The Formal Firmness of Character,” Hegel explains that unlike the external fate of Greek characters, in the Romantic Art form, a character's fate lies within the development of his or her own character.

[T]he more idiosyncratic the character is which fixedly considers itself alone and which therefore is easily on the verge of evil, the more has the individual not only to maintain himself in concrete reality against the hindrances standing in his way and blocking the realization of himself, but the more he is also driven to his downfall through this very realization. In other words, because he succeeds, he is met by the fate proceeding from his own determinate character, i.e., by a self-prepared destruction.⁹

Hegel's example here is Macbeth. We will return to him next chapter.

In Hegel's discussion of the determinacy of the ideal of art (entitled “the individual agents”), Hegel celebrates Shakespeare over against the romantic ironists. While the latter reduce all characters to nullity in order to celebrate the ironic aloofness of the spectator, “Shakespeare excels, precisely owing to the decisiveness and tautness of his characters, even in the purely formal greatness and firmness of evil.”¹⁰

The “Pathos” Must Be Actual, Pervasive, Not just a Typos or Caricature

Hegel rejects the notion of caricatures like the “Vice” character in medieval theatre. In Romantic drama, what is essential is the fully human representation. So whatever the pathos driving the character, that pathos must infuse the character's entire being in a consistent manner, and in a manner consistent with the person's subjective understanding of him or herself. Thus, Hegel writes generally that “the Ideal consists in this, that the Idea is *actual*, and to this actuality man belongs as subject and therefore as a firm unity in himself.”¹¹

Hegel's conclusion regarding “the individual's fullness of character in art” is the following:

[t]he important thing is an inherently specific essential “pathos” in a rich and full breast whose inner individual world is penetrated

by the “pathos” in such a way that this penetration, and not the ‘pathos’ alone as such, is represented. But all the same the “pathos” in the human breast must not so destroy itself in itself as thereby to exhibit itself as unsubstantial and null.¹²

Now, we can make a preliminary assessment of Henry V on the basis of Hegel’s theory of evil in art. Henry V fits each of these criteria of an evil character in the Romantic Art Form: He is a Shakespearean figure who possesses greatness and firmness of character and a “rich and full breast” penetrated by a particular pathos.

But Henry V is an odd case of evil. For the pathos driving him is not overtly evil. He is not a Macbeth, an Iago, or a Richard III. His pathos is to rule what he has been given to rule; his character is portrayed in terms of unwavering virtue; his goal is ostensibly to drive out vice, rally England to itself, and to reclaim the throne of France. For him to be an evil dramatic figure, his pathos must be shown to be evil. To do this, let us look at the *root* and *development* of evil in Hegel’s account.

Part II. Hegel’s Account of the Basic Dialectical Nature of Evil and Its Place in the Dialectical Development of the State¹³

According to Hegel, “The origin of evil in general is to be found in the mystery of freedom.”¹⁴ It would appear from this citation that evil is a result of freedom—in particular, of being able to choose the good or the bad. The problem with this interpretation of Hegel is that it does not reveal the basic philosophical structure of Hegel’s theory of the will. It also does not reveal Hegel’s positioning of evil in the *particularity* of the individual.

With regard to the structure of the free will, according to Hegel, freedom is not the abstract atemporal, aspatial condition of a Kantian self-in-itself. Rather, freedom of will arises as a result of the will’s dialectical sundering or negation (or “self-diremption”¹⁵). Evil is a case of mistaken self-identity based on a faulty view of freedom.

To explain this, let us start with a brief description of what evil looks like in the broadest dialectical terms.

In *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel Defines Evil in the Context of the Self-Sundering Notion

... the pure knowledge of the essence has in principle renounced its simple unity, for it is the self-sundering, or the negativity which the

Notion is; so far as this self-sundering is the process of becoming for itself, it is evil; so far as it is the in-itself, it remains good.¹⁶

What Hegel means here is the following. Every individual entity is teleological because it seeks its own actualization. It is also teleological only as something that is determinate. To have determinacy means that one is not everything else. What appears to move forward toward its completion in fact also radiates out in every direction. For example, the cube of salt is salt because it is not a cube of sugar, and it is not a cube of sugar because bitterness is not sweetness and so on for all the properties.¹⁷ Not being everything else but only itself is a process of negative self-differentiation from all else (as well as positive fulfillment of its telos or being towards itself). This is a form of monadism, with the important qualification that, in Hegel's view, the monad is dialectically active in relation to otherness.¹⁸

Now, negative self-differentiation, according to Hegel, can be good or bad. It is bad when what gets negated is not realized as part of the constitution of that which does the negating. In other words, negation for the sake of the entity's being-toward itself alone, is evil. In terms of a person, negating otherness solely for the sake of one's own projects is selfishness. Evil is a one-sided "take" on things.

Good negation is the true view of things. On the one hand, it actualizes itself through negation of what is not involved itself; simultaneously, on the other hand, it recognizes that negation gives rise on all sides to determinacies; it recognizes that these determinacies are important not just to its own self-actualization but to the whole. For it sees how the truth of itself is the truth of the whole, so that each of those things which it is not, is in its own right, part of the actuality of itself as well as the whole.

In terms of a person, he or she defines him- or herself as a singularly self-actualizing member of a multitudinous community. Hegel's concept of community is a reinterpretation of Kant's kingdom of ends (i.e., Kant's idea of autonomous agents under common rational laws).¹⁹ In Hegel, these laws are not a priori, they are historically developed, real, *ethical* laws.

Selfishness or one-sided negativity is evil because it is only for itself; developing oneself within a community is negativity that is good because it is for itself and for the whole. Hegel calls the whole "the in itself."

In the final analysis, for Hegel the truth is the whole "in itself." The whole (truth) is actual because it is the self-diremption of its own actuality.

Diremption is the twofold activity of *Aufhebung*: Negation of immediacy and sublation (or preservation). Evil is keeping to the one-sided force that is in-itself actually not evil. The one-sided force is rather a necessary negation within social *Aufhebung*.

The best place to see how this works is in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*.

The Rational State in the *Philosophy of Right*

In the *Philosophy of Right*, the rational State develops from its incomplete shape into its fully rational shape by going through self-diremptions or “negations.” Diremptions are *necessary* because they propel the development of Right.

Hegel cites three major diremptions:

1. Wrong²⁰
2. Evil
3. (War)

Each of these negative moments marks a transition in the *Philosophy of Right*. Each negative moment is a diremption in the previous shape that needs to be mended. Each transition is negation, alienation, and sublation. Each is an *Aufhebung*.

The first *Aufhebung* is from Abstract Right to Morality. It occurs by means of the negative moment of “Wrong.” The second *Aufhebung* is from Morality to Ethical Life. Its negative moment is “Evil or Wickedness.” Finally, the international self-determination of the State involves the negative of war.

Hegel holds that these self-diremptions are necessary. Only through them does what was there before have the chance to become actual in a higher form. The negative appears to come from without. But really (as we saw in our discussion of negative infinite judgment of crime²¹) each is expressing something implicit within itself in its immediacy. The negative applies pressure to the *apparent* stability and immediacy of a moment; that pressure pushes the development.

Let us briefly move through the transitions. We have seen that the crime of theft exerts a negative force on a person’s immediate (i.e., not yet socially mediated) claim to property (what Hegel calls Abstract Right). Diremption has the effect of alienating and externalizing what was immediately taken (for granted). We recall that Hegel defines crime as a negative infinite judgment. It reveals the incommensurability in the notion of right. Crime is not only an offence against the rights of another in terms of taking or damaging their property; it strikes a blow at the very foundation of right by not recognizing right and by acting as if it were null.

In Hegel’s account, crime, as the introduction of this negative infinite moment into the first moment of the ethical order, creates the possibility of morality. Morality only arises when a will has asserted itself against the existing order (as in the case of theft). The recognition that the will is criminally capable is a higher order of recognition than the simple assertion that something is mine (which is inherently a kind of theft). The essence of morality is that will as self-conscious autonomous subject. The will is the disjunction between the “ought” and the “is.”

When a socially unmediated claim to right comes under the power of someone's negative infinite judgment, a crime has occurred. But judgment is thereby raised out of its immediate sensibility about rights to recognition that the competing wills that are making competing claims have to be considered and that judgment must reason toward fair laws.

Thus, out of the alienation of Abstract Right, socially mediated laws are born. The moment of alienation was necessary because the immediate right to property was not fully rational (not fully community-recognized). Prior to that alienation, the incommensurability between self and its willed possession of a thing was not recognized. The negation forces the immediate claim to become something mediated and therefore more rational. (This is the transition from Abstract Right to Morality.)

In Morality, the community-mediated right to property—the law—is understood to be something socially created. The origin of law is the autonomy of the will. Negative pressure now falls not on right but on the new “immediacy” of morality. If we are freely constructing our laws, we are free to construct evil ones, and an evil ruler can wreak havoc on the community. This therefore requires a transition to a yet more adequate social justice. This transition (required because of the problem not of crime but of evil) is a move from the *de facto* authority of reason, to the collective wisdom of ethical life (i.e., the transition from Morality to Ethical Life.)

Finally, the ethical life of a nation, in its turn, is challenged through negations presented in international conflict.

As I mentioned above, in each case, the negation appears to come from without, but it is really a self-sundering of an original immediacy and of any immediacy thereafter.

The good news about this is that negation is the antidote to the apparent stability of hegemony. The bad news is that ethical life cannot do without disruption. The persistent role of negation (from abstract right through to international conflict) is the reason why Lukács claims that, for young Hegel, Ethical life is tragic.²² I will address this in more detail later.

Part III. Crimes and Evils of the Sovereign Self: Retracing the Plays

Let us go through these moments of the *Philosophy of Right* again, this time in relation to the Princes of the History plays that we have analyzed.²³

Richard II's attitude toward the crown and his Sovereign self belonged to Abstract Right. He took the crown to be his right. More significantly, he also took what he wanted in the kingdom. His royally sanctioned pilfering of Bolingbroke's estate was naïve royal right to possession. In truth, however, his act was the capriciousness of a singular will against another will.

Bolingbroke capitalized on this by claiming the crown was *his*. This was not naïve appropriation. He recognized that the crown, like any “right,” was socially constructed and sustained by the will of the court. Bolingbroke achieved a higher level of “right” by designing into court policy his right to the throne. Admittedly, he does this through the force of ambition, but he achieves it by means of politically clever contract formation. Having properly alienated Sovereign Abstract Right, Bolingbroke establishes Sovereign “Morality.” Richard II’s *de jure* power (Abstract Right) passes onto the question of the correct lineage of power (Morality).

The alienation of sovereign abstract right reduced Richard II’s *de jure* status to a mere show. Bolingbroke later describes how cheap Richard II (the “skipping king”) used to look riding through London in royal pomp.²⁴ Bolingbroke’s negative power against Richard II revealed this ceremony of entitlement to be a mere show, both in the public’s eye and later in Richard II eyes.²⁵

We saw in Chapter 5 that there is a counterresponse to being made into a mere show. What emerged was the dialectic of the true heart vs. self-conceit. Richard II dies a broken heart, but not before he understands the dialectic. Bolingbroke is less savvy. He is caught between the poles of this opposition.

The court (alongside Bolingbroke) had recognized that a mere show was insufficient in the socially weighty matters of right and that a new structure needed to be put in its place. It had to be one that recognized laws to be generated by something other than the caprice of the sovereign self. But now the pressure was on the “Moral” King Bolingbroke. Sovereignty must not be an endless series of thefts. It must be based on something true: It must be based on governance with heart. That is what Bolingbroke does not have.

So, in court, we have, on the one hand, the moral sovereign who recognizes the inherent rationality of theft within the concept of someone simply declaring something to be his own (or to be according to his own will). This insight is Bolingbroke’s wit (unfunny as it is). He knows that laws are social ceremonies. On the other hand, Bolingbroke must believe in the power of his ruling wit. He must justify his legislations (of rights, property, and royal lineage). This he has a hard time doing.

To find the missing part, let us go over this yet again, one half of the dialectic at a time. On one side of the dialectic, we have the wit inherent in morality. In the play (*Henry IV* Part 1), the transition to wit happens simultaneously on several levels. At court, we have passed to the wit of Bolingbroke as Henry IV. At Eastcheap, we have passed to the wit of Falstaff. As we saw in Chapter 6, the transition from abstract rule through alienation to a new form of power is mirrored by a transition in the language around the king. From Richard II’s unmediated honesty that takes linguistic ceremonies for granted, we have passed to the wit of Falstaff and the other men of the moon (including Hal). We have passed from the naïve “royal we” to Falstaff’s “we who are ‘all the world.’”

On both levels (in the court and in language), we have passed to the wit that has recognized the inherent rationality of theft (and its corollary, counterfeiting) within the concept of someone simply declaring himself to be someone. Wit is free to play at will with pomp and ceremony. Wit dictates rules for assigning identity.

The other side of the dialectic is the need of the heart. That is, there is the need for laws that are not capricious and the need for ownership that is not theft. In Morality, the law of the heart recognizes the constructed nature of laws. What has emerged in *Henry IV* Part 1 is a *capricious* wit that does not seek to justify anything (Falstaff) and the *conscientious* wit that does seek to justify itself (Bolingbroke).²⁶ Neither of these positions succeeds.

Morality, like Abstract Right, falters on its own ground. Falstaff's sovereign wit is continuously criminal. Sovereign *conscience*, for its part, cannot shake the fact that it was a negative infinite judgment, a free will, a capacity for crime that made the moral standpoint—the right to the throne—possible in the first place.²⁷

The crimes of the sovereign self at the level of morality have thus gone in two directions. On the one hand, there are the comic negative infinite judgments of Falstaff. On the other hand, there is the serious negative infinite judgment of Bolingbroke. Because of the dialectical nature of their developments, each carries the other's aspect within him. Thus Falstaff's wit is tied to a love and fidelity for Hal that will make Falstaff serious. Henry IV's guilt over stealing the crown arises out of his destabilizing wit. Neither figure can survive. Neither institutes a rationally just and ethical order. Each succumbs to the particularity of his "sovereignty."

Falstaff, for all his levity, falls short because, as we saw in Chapter 6, he does not resolve the problem of the autonomous agent in relation to the common good. The problem for capricious wit is the same as the problem for conscientious wit: There is always the possibility that in willing, even in the guise of willing the (jolly) common good, it is willing something evil.

Bolingbroke as Henry IV becomes diseased with paranoia. His wit had the negative power to show up Richard's presumption; but thereafter, his wit is not able to rest comically in its own alienation. Henry IV is gradually overcome by the need to overcome the reign of negative infinite judgments. Let us look at this in more detail.

Bolingbroke has all along been playing with the incommensurability between self and possession. He is aware of the instability of the sovereign self. On the one hand, he is therefore plagued by fear: His political contracts could be undone by the very people who made them with him. On the other hand, his subjectivity is not merely Machiavellian. He is conscientious. He wants what he did to be justified. He is plagued by the possibility that, despite his *socially* accepted transition to the throne, it might *really* have been theft without justification. This is made worse by the fact that one of his followers *robbed* Richard

II of his life. All of this takes the shape of a haunting. Henry IV articulates this when he obsessively recalls Richard II's pronouncement about time:

Henry IV: "When Richard, with his eye brimful of tears,
Then checked and rated by Northumberland,
Did speak these words, now proved a prophecy?—
'Northumberland, thou ladder by the which
My cousin Bolingbroke ascends my throne'—
Though then, God knows, I had no such intent,
But that necessity so bowed the state
That I and greatness were compelled to kiss—
'The time shall come'—thus did he follow it—
'The time will come that foul sin, gathering head,
Shall break into corruption'; so went on,
Foretelling this same time's condition,
And the division or our amity."²⁸

Henry IV is under the spell of a time. He does not want to be alienated. He seeks justification: He wants to send out a Crusade, he wants to "die in Jerusalem."²⁹ He wants something that will justify *his* time.

Henry IV's standpoint of morality is pocked with the problem of autonomous interpreters who choose their own particularity over the universal common good. In his view, only the external symbol of heaven on earth (the Holy Grail) can unite the individuals under one Sovereign Self. Henry IV dies, dreaming the unfinished business of an Unhappy Consciousness.³⁰

Falstaff and Bolingbroke commit *crimes* of the sovereign self and establish forms of "moral/a-moral" sovereignty. But neither of them is evil. Each of them is a counterfeit who has revealed the "honest" sovereign self to be a sham but who cannot constitute the social in a just manner.

Hal is a counterfeit of another order than Falstaff and Bolingbroke. As we have seen, Hal *is* a false thief.³¹ Hal is no criminal; he is evil. He is indifferent to both the witty and to conscience. He is not the alienation of abstract right. He is the alienation of *morality*. He has Falstaff's chutzpa and his father's will to power; but he has rejected Falstaff's heart and his father's conscience. He rises above human history with its world of real vs. counterfeit contractual laws. His evil lies precisely in his ability to make hypocrisy look like the return of virtue. "We are the makers of manners Kate."³²

We have looked at Hal's rejection of wit. Now we need to look at his rejection of conscience. To do this, we must understand the relationship of conscience to evil. We begin by delving into the moment of evil in the *Philosophy of Right*.

Part IV. Evil in the *Philosophy of Right*³³

The Psychology of Evil: Between Nature and Reason; Evil Is Choosing the Form of One's Particularity

Just as crime marks the transition to morality, evil marks the transition from morality to ethical life. In order to see this clearly, let us look at how evil arises psychologically.

According to Hegel, evil arises from a level of our psyche between reason and natural inclinations. First there is the natural impulse of the child. Then there is a moment when the child realizes that there is choice between natural impulses as well as choice of following the voice of parental authority. With choice, there simultaneously arises the activity of reflection. Reflection about options and the subsequent decision about how to act set up the possibility of choosing one's natural impulse over a more socialized one.

Now, one could conclude from this that evil is a selfish choice to fulfill a natural impulse, the act no longer driven merely by natural desire but instead reflectively chosen. According to this line of reasoning, evil would be the reflective choice of selfish ends instead of ends known to be good for the community.³⁴

But there is more to Hegel's story of evil. First of all, choosing one's natural impulses over other people's interests would be a *crime*, not an evil. In order to be evil and not just selfish, the agent must allow not his *singularity* but rather his *particularity* to dominate the scene.

Secondly, for Hegel, the good of the community is not something separate from the willing agent. The truth of subjectivity is its universality as free and rational multiplicity. So in being evil, the person has in fact chosen *against* his own true subjective nature.

Let us look more at what it means to say that it is not the singularity but the particularity of the person that is important in evil.

According to Hegel, "particularity is always duality; here it is the opposition of the natural level and the inwardness of the will."³⁵ Particularity is made up of two interpenetrating dualisms. (Hegel does not develop the dialectic here to this extreme, but for clarity it is helpful to do so in order to understand what he goes on to assert.) One dualism comes from the fact that our situation pulls toward the singular—we tend to see our situations as unique—while on the other hand we think of the unique situation from the point of view of ourselves as a universal "I" (when, for example, we say to ourselves, "anyone who found themselves in this unique situation would see what I mean").

In this dualism, one is still primarily identifying both poles in a selfish manner. One's choice of action or non-action is based on the assumption that the self is unique in its situation. This is not evil yet. A second dualism is born

out of the first dualism. Since I am all I's, and since those other I's who are not in my situation do not share in my unique condition, my "I" is essentially separate even from the uniqueness of my situation. "I" can separate myself off from either pole of the first duality, i.e., I can choose to ignore the uniqueness by affirming the universal "I" (either stoically not acting or imposing an abstract solution) or I can choose to act against the universal "I" by engaging in an act within the unique situation that results in something good for me in this unique condition.

According to Hegel, a properly self-conscious universal "I" is the "I" that is a "we" and the "we" that is an "I." Such an "I" would not choose a route of action that did not lead to the common (maximally multiple) good. For the universal good is understood in Hegel in the way that existentialists like Sartre and De Beauvoir would later view it, i.e., as the commitment to freedom that is the commitment to the freedom of others.³⁶ In Hegel's words, "The good is thus freedom realized, the absolute end and aim of the world."³⁷ Evil is the commitment only to one's own freedom. Evil is essentially mistaken, therefore, since there is no real freedom outside of the fully realized freedom of the free community.

Evil is the subject's rejection of its universal "I" by choosing an action in the unique situation, an action which he or she knows will only satisfy his or her particular self in this particular situation.³⁸

We can approach this in another way. Evil is not what is "natural" as opposed to "reflective" since natural impulses are not in themselves evil (though some may be bad). Nor is evil what is merely reflective as opposed to what is natural, first because reflection and choice are also natural to us and second, because reflection is only the condition of acting self-consciously, not the choice itself of good or of evil.

Rather, evil is choosing an action—whether natural impulse or a reflected-upon act—which denies the universality of the "I" and therefore which denies the relationship of the self to the multiplicity of the common good.³⁹

Thus according to Hegel, "[i]t is this natural level of the will which comes into existence as a self-contradiction, as incompatible with itself in this opposition, and so it is just this particularity of the will which later makes itself evil."⁴⁰ Particularity is the diremption in nature in which will arises and makes evil possible.

But what is this "later" moment that makes evil actually rise?

The answer is that particularity gives rise not only to the will on one side and the *content* of possible actions in this unique situation on the other. Particularity also brings before consciousness *the will as the form* of this opposition (between will and natural impulses). The will-as-the-form-of-opposition becomes content for consciousness. This will-as-form-of-opposition, because it is the form of an opposition (the form of a *duality*), is itself *in opposition* to

the *unity* of the self as universal will. Since the unity of the universal will seeks the universal good, the will-as-form-of-opposition also stands over-against the common good.⁴¹ It is "the form-of-two" against one.

Now, Hegel writes obscurely that:

... since the will here makes into a determinant of its content both these impulses in this contingent character which they possess as natural, and also, therefore, the form which it has at this point, the form of particularity itself, it follows that it is set in opposition of the universal as inner objectivity, to the good, which comes on the scene as the opposite extreme to immediate objectivity, the natural pure and simple, as soon as the will is reflected into itself and consciousness is a *knowing* consciousness. It is in this opposition that this inwardness of the will is evil.⁴²

Let us unpack this. The *content* of the formal duality (the particularity) is made up of the particular circumstances. So both the formal duality and the content are part of what makes an act evil. For the selfishness of evil is not merely the formal recognition that I can choose my own will as opposed to the common will. It is that I choose this particular action because it leads to more of *my* freedom, but it does so *in this oppositional sense*. I choose it as opposed to the particular action which folds my freedom back into the unity of the free community. So the content is essential. But the form of duality is equally essential. For evil is not chosen for the thing that the self wants; evil is chosen for the self as free in its opposition. The content must be used, but it must be irrelevant in itself. It is merely a tool. It has to be irrelevant, because the content (i.e., something in the world) is what embodies the self, making it one with the community of other embodied selves that must share the world. To be attached to the content is to submerge oneself in the whole.⁴³

The ultimate problem for and undoing of the evil person is that he or she *is* embodied. This is part of the story of why Hal is ultimately not going to survive having rejected the embodiment of wit. I will return to this later.

So subjectivity (inwardness of will) is not at first or essentially evil. It is only evil when the *particularity* (the form of duality) dominates at the expense of the community. Evil is not selfishness derived solely from subjective inwardness—for subjective inwardness is the *sine qua non* of any will, good or bad. Selfishness is a second order of inwardness in which the form of duality over against unity is chosen (and chosen as a unity). Thus, instead of saying that identity is the unity of identity and difference, evil says that the identity of difference rules. Or, to give it the actual situational content: "*my* difference rules."

It is important to mention here that this account of evil and good does not seek to disregard difference in favor of the good. On the contrary,

a good community is one that recognizes the differences of the “I” as well as the unity of those “I’s” that in truth are its content. A good community is a unity of differences in which each difference is committed to the freedom of itself *and of others*. The good particular person mediates the unique singularity with the universal. An evil particular person uses their particularity for their particular gain.

The tricky fact, however, is that one *has* to develop particularity because it is the precondition for developing into someone who seeks universal good. The diremption that gives rise to particularity must occur if we are to be responsible. We can make sense of this by looking at how Hegel’s theory of evil is neither a theory of original sin or absolute evil.

Part V. Hegel’s Evil Is Self-Diremption, Not Sin or Absolute Evil

Original Diremption Not Original Sin

Evil and good are dialectically related. In not choosing evil, we do not deny that there is diremption. The fact that there is a choice is a result of the diremption.

It is not that there ought never to be a diremption of any sort in the will—on the contrary, it is just this level of diremption which distinguishes man from the unreasoning animal; the point [in denying evil—JB] is that the will should not rest at that level and cling to the particular as if that and not the universal were the essential thing; it should overcome the diremption as a nullity.⁴⁴

This is not a theory about an a priori self over against a natural self. There is no unchangeable moral law imposed from on high onto finite beings. (This fact will be important later in distinguishing Henry V from Hegel’s monarch.) Hegel’s theory of evil is not a theory about original sin or redemption in terms of grace.⁴⁵ Rather, the will of necessity dirempts itself for its own progress. Self-diremption gives rise to two mutually reflecting and dialectically interpenetrating parts of us. We affirm our freedom by means of that diremption, by means of becoming alienated from the immediacy of our will. The problem—and that for which we must take responsibility—is that this moment gives birth to evil as well as good.

There Is No Absolute Evil Because We Are Responsible

Let us cash out the arena of evil so that we can see that for which we are responsible. Evil has both an internal expression and an external expression.⁴⁶

Internal Evil: "Negative Freedom"

Internal evil is expressed in terms of the individual abstracting his or her ego from the world and using the world to his or her own ends. This is a negative freedom. Hegel thinks it is an illusion.⁴⁷ It is the kind of evil we see in Richard III ("hell's black intelligencer"⁴⁸).

External or Political Evil

External evil is, on the one hand, the range of terrible effects that the internal form of evil wreaks on the individual and on others. This is the negative political result implicit in the internal self-abstraction. For example, if Hal's negative freedom were to become the spirit of the day for each citizen, all hell would break loose. That kind of will to power, expressed *en masse* by multiple individuals or groups, leads to the sort of "Absolute Freedom and Terror" of the French Revolution, as discussed by Hegel in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. This radical revolution is a topic of which Hegel was "perhaps the first to form a critique."⁴⁹

Absolute Evil

Hegel does not discuss absolute evil. But the Hegelian scholar Emil Fackenheim argues that there is such an evil and his instance of it is Auschwitz.⁵⁰ Fackenheim argues that Hegel's system is unable to accommodate the evil of what happened to the Jews there during World War Two. He concludes therefore that Hegel's system is flawed.⁵¹

I do not have the space here to provide a summary of the many discussions this has created in Hegel scholarship. Let me briefly reply with the following.

According to Hegel's theory, we are responsible for our evils. The diremptive nature of the will (as well as the forms that the will takes as it develops dialectically by means of diremptions) makes it impossible to talk of an evil separate from our development. If it is not separable from our development, it is subject to further diremptions and developments.

Fackenheim's argument for an evil coming from something for which we are not responsible requires that evil comes to us as something external. On the one hand, according to Hegel's account, any external, *political* form of evil is the externalization of negative freedoms. So there is no way of arguing for an absolute evil that comes to us from outside. On the other hand, since negative freedom is the will, nor can it be argued that evil is so radically *in* us that it is "external" to our wills. Neither Absolute nor Radical evil can be thought outside of our wills.

Evil is therefore our collective responsibility. It arises out of a shape of a willing sovereign self.⁵² Hegel expresses this clearly:

[A]s to this necessity of evil, it is subjectivity as infinite self-reflection, which is present in and confronted by this opposition of universal and particular; if it rests in this opposition, i.e., if it is evil, then it is *eo ipso* independent, regarding itself as isolated, and is itself this self-will. Therefore if the individual subject as such does evil, the evil is purely and simply his own responsibility.⁵³

Notice that it is the evil individual that “regards itself as isolated.” The truth, as we saw above, is that its isolation is an illusion. This is why, in Hegel’s theory of drama, evil characters are shipwrecked when their pathos collides with the world.⁵⁴

Part VI. Negative Freedom and Henry V’s Stance Beyond Time

We began our reflections on Henry V by evoking the temporal and spatial aspects of Hegel’s dialectic.⁵⁵ I claimed that Henry V’s unchangeableness is the spatial side of the dialectic and that he is rejecting the temporal, changing side. He is therefore taking a stand beyond the sub-lunar world of change and contingency, occupying the place of the sun’s regal and unchanging virtue. Henry V’s ability to stand outside of time comes from his rejection of the men of the moon. But it also comes from the standpoint he inherits from his father.

Henry IV (Bolingbroke) stood outside time in a despairing way. He was driven there by his inability to command the sovereign world he had created. His sovereign self generated a kingdom of contractual agreements that were ostensibly based on just cause. He felt the need to make sure that his sovereignty was legitimate under God. But he could not satisfy this need because he was plagued by the possibility that Richard II’s sovereignty was the true one. This alienated him from the time of his own sovereignty. He steps out of the world in nihilistic defeat. Notice in the following speech by Henry IV, how both temporal and spatial metaphors are used to give full shape to his alienation. The world wearily turns from spatial solidity to temporal contingency without end:

Henry IV: “O God, that one might read the book of fate,
And see the revolution of the times
Make mountains level, and the continent,
Weary of solid firmness, melt itself
Into the sea; and other times to see
The breachy girdle of the ocean
Too wide for Neptune’s hips; how chance’s mocks
And changes fill the cup of alteration

With divers liquors!
O, if this were seen,
The happiest youth, viewing his progress through,
What perils past, what crosses to ensue,
Would shut the book and sit him down and die.”⁵⁶

Henry IV's troubled world of “(a)moral” sovereignty gives birth to Henry V's alienated standpoint outside of time and space. But Henry V (Hal), instead of being alienated from the sub-lunar world of change, makes his “eternal” vantage point the basis of his sovereignty. This standpoint is what Hegel calls “negative freedom.” It is evil in the way that we have seen above: Henry V chooses the form of his duality over against an embodiment in universal unity. His social bonding therefore takes the shape of rallying the troops into a battle for which they will be eternally remembered. Even though he declares universal brotherhood in that speech, we know that what motivates him is not universal brotherhood but rather his universal sovereignty (over England and France).

Henry V's sovereign self has become an unmoved mover. His standpoint outside of contingency is evil. He is not nihilistic or anarchic: he is motivated by a particular goal. That goal is masked. Henry V is responsible for his standpoint, for his goal and for its being masked. To shed light on this murky terrain of evil, hypocrisy and responsibility, let us look in more detail at the nature of conscience and its relationship to evil.

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Chapter 9

Richard III, Hamlet, Macbeth, and Henry V

Conscience, Hypocrisy, Self-Deceit and the Tragedy of Ethical Life

Prince Harry (Hal): “What wouldst you think of me if I should weep?”

Poins: “I would think thee a most princely hypocrite.”

—*Henry IV* Part 2¹

“Th’abuse of greatness is when it disjoins / Remorse from power.”

—Brutus, *Julius Caesar*²

Introduction

This chapter follows upon the last two chapters and brings their arguments to a conclusion. We have been developing an argument about the nature of Henry V’s evil. So far, we have looked at his stance of virtue, investigated Hegel’s account of crime and evil, and used that to retrace the developments of the sovereign self from Richard II through to Henry V.

This chapter begins by delving further into the problem of evil. We investigate conscience, the good, and the evil of hypocrisy. Then we look at three other princes’ relationship to these. We conclude with our final assessment of Henry V.

Part I. Hegel on Conscience, the Good and the Slip into Evil

Evil's Relation to Conscience and to the Good

In Hegel's view, evil cannot be thought separately from conscience and the good, for evil is a *conscientious* choice of selfish ends over good, universal ends.

Conscience

Hegel's theory of conscience appears in a number of his works and it is dealt with differently in different places.³ In his view, conscience is historically specific: It is a feature of the modern, Germanic world, of Germanic inwardness of subjectivity and practices of communicating conscientious convictions in a spirit of mutual recognition.⁴

In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel distinguishes between formal and true conscience.⁵ Formal conscience is the basis of true conscience: It is self-certain, *moral* freedom. True conscience is the completion of formal conscience in the social life of the rational State: It is universalized, *ethical* freedom. Formal conscience risks slipping into doing only what the ego wants (i.e., slipping into particularity); true conscience knows and does the universal good. The former is abstract, the latter socially embodied. The former is the necessary condition of the latter, but not sufficient for it.⁶

In the transition from morality to ethical life, we move from formal conscience to true conscience by negating the negation within formal conscience (i.e., we negate merely egoistic (negative) freedom in favor of ethical freedom).

The Good

Hegel believes that "True conscience is the disposition to will what is absolutely good."⁷ In Kant's moral philosophy, the highest good is the creation of a good will.⁸ In Hegel's ethical philosophy, the highest good is the rational State. True conscience is the disposition to will (within) the rational State. The rational State is the actualization of freedom as community. We discussed this last chapter. Here, let us look more closely at Hegel's concept of the good.

Hegel writes that "The good is the Idea as the unity of the concept of the will with the particular will."⁹ This unity is not an abstraction: It is the embodiment of all the institutions that have been explained so far in the *Philosophy of Right*. Those previous moments are sublated into the good, i.e., they are negated and yet preserved in their essence:

In this unity, abstract right, welfare, the subjectivity of knowing and the contingency of external fact, have their independent

self-subsistence superseded, though at the same time they are still contained and retained within it in their essence. The good is thus freedom realized, the absolute end and aim of the world.¹⁰

Individuals in the State are the actualization of the State as rational ethical order. According to Hegel, this means that in the State, the social spirit has achieved a "second nature." It is the mind acting as mind for the first time:

...when individuals are simply identified with the actual order, ethical life (*das Sittliche*) appears as their general mode of conduct, i.e. as custom (*Sitte*), while the habitual practice of ethical living appears as a second nature which, put in the place of the initial, purely natural will, is the soul of custom permeating it through and through, the significance and the actuality of its existence. It is mind living and present as a world, and the substance of mind thus exists now for the first time as mind.¹¹

The Ethical State is Hegel's "unmoved mover." When a person's character is ethical

... he recognizes as the end which moves him to act the universal which is itself unmoved but is disclosed in its specific determinations as rationality actualized. He knows that his own dignity and the whole stability of his particular ends are grounded in this same universal, and it is therein that he actually attains these.¹²

In the Ethical Life of the State, the potential for evil that comes out of particularity is sublated into unity with the universal. This does not mean that subjectivity is compromised. It means that the negative freedom of the subject—its assumed position outside of time and space—is itself negated into the fact that it could never sustain itself in that separation because its truth is that it is dialectically a part of the whole. It is "mind living and present in the world." It is therefore unified (but dialectically actualized) into the dialectical universality of State rationality. The free individual acts for the freedom of each in a multiplicity that is therefore free. In other words, the offending division is sublated into dialectical actualization. Hegel explains:

Subjectivity is itself the absolute form and existent actuality of the substantial order, and the distinction between subject on the one hand and substance on the other, as the object, end, and controlling power of the subject, is the same as, and has vanished directly along with, the distinction between them in form.¹³

In Chapter 7, we discussed two lesser forms of the common good. These were Falstaff's and Henry V's respective forms of "social bonding."¹⁴ These forms belonged to Chivalry. They are not the good that Hegel means when he here writes of the good in Ethical Life. But we suggested then that Falstaff's heart might be a better one to develop than Henry V's rousing of patriotic brotherhood. We revisit this as we proceed.

To begin, let us look at the difference between their kinds of chivalric bonding and the universal citizenship of which Hegel is writing here.

We can understand the difference by looking at freedom. According to Hegel, we do not get the *complete* freedom within the State in either Abstract Right or Morality. Only in Ethical Life do we finally find the social conditions adequate to the idea of freedom. For "[s]ubjectivity is the ground wherein the concept of freedom is realized. . . . At the level of morality, subjectivity is still distinct from freedom, the concept of subjectivity; but at the level of ethical life it is the realization of the concept in a way adequate to the concept itself."¹⁵ In other words, in Ethical Life, freedom is the free unity of our particularity with the universal. We experience the "dignity and whole stability of our particular ends as grounded in the universal." This social bond is one in which all free agents participate willingly in the free construction of the rational order. Thus, for Hegel, the final shape of the good is the embodiment of our free will in a rational State.

But before this can happen, our conscience has to pass through a ring of fire. For we have to have experienced the full *potential* of evil in ourselves. We have come some way toward understanding this. Let us look at it further.

Morality and Evil Have their Common Root in Independent Self-Certainty

According to Hegel, evil is a function of the freedom of conscience; freedom of conscience is the result of a self-diremption of the natural soul's immediacy into a reflective soul that is capable of judging conflicting inclinations and duties. Hegel writes that

[o]nce self-consciousness has reduced all otherwise valid duties to emptiness and itself to the sheer inwardness of the will, it has become the potentiality of either making the absolutely universal its principle, or equally well of elevating above the universal the self-will of private particularity, taking that as its principle and realizing it through its actions, i.e. it has become potentially evil.¹⁶

We have seen how, in an alienated culture (permeated by negative infinite judgments) the very concept of a "valid duty" has been emptied of absolute significance. The "sheer inwardness of the will," which scared Henry IV but which was the platform for Henry V's sovereignty, was a position in which one

had choice with regard to how one would view and use the world. Henry V chose to use the social body in a way that furthered his sovereign self-will. But he could have chosen to immerse himself in the whole in a way that developed the freedom of the whole (rather than bringing the whole to war).

Hegel's point about this juncture at which evil can arise is that choice, conscience, and the possibility of evil arise at the same point in our development:

To have a conscience, if conscience is only formal subjectivity, is simply to be on the verge of slipping into evil [*ins Böse umzuschlagen*]; in independent self-certainty, with its independence of knowledge and decision, both morality and evil have their common root.

The origin of evil in general is to be found in the mystery of freedom (i.e. in the speculative aspect of freedom), the mystery whereby freedom of necessity arises out of the natural level of the will and is something inward in comparison with that level.¹⁷

Both the conscientious will and the evil will have "abstract self-certainty."¹⁸ Neither the conscientious person nor the evil person has comprehended the "presupposed total in whose complex he exists."¹⁹

Henry V rejects the body, his first natural self, and takes on a "second nature" that appears to be unified with the common good but is really positioned beyond it. Henry V asserts negative freedom and thereby takes a disembodied position. This movement is necessary for the development of the rational State, but it is not sufficient for it.

Why does Henry V choose to maintain his sovereign self as separate? Why does he place the whole world on the infinite point of sovereign honor and mask it with patriotic brotherhood?

Hypocrisy

*Hypocrisy in General*²⁰

In Hegel's view, hypocrisy is the pinnacle of evil within the sphere of morality. "This final, most abstruse, form of evil, whereby evil is perverted into good and good into evil, and consciousness, in being aware of its power to effect this perversion, is also made aware of itself as absolute, is the highwater mark of subjectivity at the level of morality."²¹ For Hegel, the hypocrite who fools himself is the most despicable form of hypocrite.²²

It is clear that Henry V is a hypocrite. But has he deceived himself?

Self-Deceiving Hypocrisy

In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel's discussion of conscience focuses largely on a critique of the ethics of conviction.²³ Hypocrisy in the simple sense is evident

in Bolingbroke and Falstaff: They put masks on in a general negation of immediate honesty. That hypocrisy was a crime against the pretense of unmediated sovereignty. But hypocrisy as self-deception is a crime against *conscience*. As Wood summarizes, for Hegel it involves two things: “knowledge of the true universal, and an attempt to represent something conflicting with the universal as something conforming to it (the representation may be either to others or self-deceptively to oneself).”²⁴

We recall Hegel’s earlier distinction between formal and true conscience. We cannot convict Henry V in terms of true conscience, because true conscience only exists in a rational State. We must consider him in terms of formal conscience.

Now, it *appears* that formal conscience cannot be hypocritical. For formal conscience is not concerned with objective content but only with conviction. It is happy to announce that it is alone in its conviction.²⁵ However, once I have declared my view to be founded on conviction rather than objective laws, I am being a hypocrite if I then take my formal conscience to be the expression of objective good. Wood explains:

There is something inherently hypocritical in trying to justify myself by appealing to the principle that I should not be blamed as long as I am following my own moral convictions. For if I appeal *solely* to formal conscience in order to do this—as the ethics of conviction says I may do—then I am representing my fallible conviction as a standard of objective rightness—something which it is not, and which *I know* it is not. The appeal of conscience “solely to itself is directly opposed to what it seeks to be—that is, the rule for a rational and universal mode of action that is valid in and for itself.”²⁶ If I am honest with myself and others, I will not attempt to deny that to the extent that I act on moral convictions that are objectively wrong, my will is implicated in the evil that I do, and I am blamable for it.²⁷

Henry V is a hypocrite because he does exactly what is described here: He knows that sovereign self-certainty is what one wills it to be, but he assumes the guise of ancient heroic virtue in all its immediate simplicity. He does not take that guise to be the expression of his merely subjective conviction. Rather, he asserts his conviction to be the universal good. (And his society allows this.)

But is this *self-deception*? In order to show that it is, we need to delve further into the nature of conscience, self-deception, and hypocrisy. To bring these themes into more complex dramatic light, let us look at three other princes.

Part II. Conscience, (Self-)Deception and Evil in Richard III, Macbeth, and Hamlet

Richard III's Evil Is a Conscious Rejection of Conscience

Many would agree that the most evil character in all of Shakespeare is Richard III.²⁸ He is knowingly evil. He knows what true conscience is and explicitly—gleefully—rejects it:

Conscience is but a word that cowards use
Our strong arms be our conscience; swords, our law,
March on, join bravely! Let us to't, pell mell—
If not to heaven, then hand in hand to hell.²⁹

Richard is quintessentially evil. He speaks with a forked tongue: "Thus like the formal Vice, Iniquity, / I moralize two meanings in one word."³⁰

Other characters in the play represent levels of evil, as though the play in general were an exercise in how far one can go toward satisfying one's personal interests while still involving conscience (even to the point of stepping outside it altogether). Thus, Richard III's right-hand man (Buckingham) can do every murder except the murder of the boy princes; one of the two murderers of Richard III's brother hesitates on the grounds of conscience; he gives in when he thinks of the reward for the murder. Then there is Sir James Tyrrell, Richard III's assistant, who kills the boys and whose sociopathic behavior reveals a man without conscience—a kind of machine acting out Richard's will.

Richard III is more evil than all of these characters because he chooses his evil and his evil has no limits. His complete idiosyncrasy makes him witty in the extreme. But his wit has no heart.³¹ He is the perfect example of formal conscience (that is, of free self-certainty without the ethical principles of the State) gone to the dark side. He is indeed "hell's black intelligencer."³²

The bodied, social side of Richard III is the site of rejection. Like the bastard son Edmund in *King Lear*, he (rightly) blames society for regarding him as evil even before he acts. In his case, it is because he has a malformed body. Richard III's aunt endorses the social belief that deformity is a sign of evil when she says the following to him:

No sleep close up that deadly eye of thine,
Unless it be while some tormenting dream
Afrights thee with a hell of ugly devils.
Thou elvish-marked, abortive, rooting hog,
Thou that wast sealed [i.e., stamped] in thy nativity

The slave of nature and the son of hell,
 Thou slander of thy heavy mother's womb,
 Thou loathèd issue of thy father's womb,
 Thou rag of honour, thou detested—³³

Neither Richard III nor Edmund believes that there is any reason for their condition. They know it is how one spins the cultural story that makes the man, and so they both spin things to make society conform to their wills. It is as if society, by failing to recognize these individuals as ends in themselves, has created in each of them an evil will that freely uses society as a means.

Society and Providence retaliate against Richard III's and Edmund's evils. We should come away feeling that they were not the free agents they thought they were.³⁴ But I only feel this with regard to Edmund. At the end of *Lear*, dying Edmund admits that fortune has caught up with his evil deeds and he shows something of remorse; at the end of *Richard III*, Richard embraces death in the same way as he embraced evil all the way through the play. That is, evil and death are what he is all about, the end is the same as the beginning; there is no mediation of spirit to be made in his soul. His body goes up in the same flames in which he lived his life and which are all he really knows.³⁵

It is true that, the night before the final battle, Richard III suffers the return of his murdered in the shape of ghosts. He appears to succumb then to his conscience. But his cry to his soldiers the next morning that "Conscience is but a word that cowards use"³⁶ puts an end to that.

Hegel on Richard III

Hegel mentions Richard III three times in the *Aesthetics*. Let me summarize briefly. First, Hegel praises Shakespeare for making characters in which there is "taut firmness and one-sidedness that is supremely admirable."³⁷ Hegel gives Richard III as an example,³⁸ asserting that his firmness and the "identity of the man with himself and the end arising from his own decision gives him an essential interest for us."³⁹

Second, according to Hegel, Richard III is a case in which Shakespeare uses a "profound humour" to lift characters "away above themselves and their crude, restricted and false aims."⁴⁰ Greenblatt articulates this well when he combines that profound humor with Richard III's gusto and eroticism: "Eros has not been excluded from Richard's career; it has found a new and compelling form in his energetic, witty, and murderous chafing against the obstacles in his path. These obstacles are not simply set in opposition to his desire; rather they virtually constitute it."⁴¹

Finally, according to Hegel, Richard III is a case of the modern man driven by passion, someone whose “greater reflectiveness of the wrong and crime” into which he is forced while accomplishing his end make him “deserve for his atrocities nothing better than what happens to him.”⁴²

We see that Richard III is a hypocrite when he needs to be (for example, when he pretends to be too pious and unworthy of taking the throne⁴³). But he never fools himself.

To prod further into the nature of hypocritical *self*-deceit, let us examine other princes in their relation to evil. In both *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, the dream world is mingled with the real more than in *Richard III*. The issues of conscience and responsibility are therefore more complex.

Part III. Conscience and the “Slip” into Evil: Hamlet and Macbeth

Conscience Is Always on the Verge of Slipping into Evil.
What Is This Slipping?⁴⁴

Hamlet is a case of someone determined to *prevent* his conscience from slipping into evil. He cannot simply let a ghost sway his conscience. Hegel praises Hamlet for seeking proof: “the apparition does not command a helpless Hamlet; Hamlet doubts, and, by arrangements of his own, will get certainty for himself, before he embarks on action.”⁴⁵ Skepticism and suspicion keep his conscience from slipping. But Hamlet bemoans that “conscience does make cowards of us all.”⁴⁶

In *Macbeth*, the tenor of things is different. Macbeth is not a skeptic; he is a believer. Hamlet forces the theater of truth to be outside his head for all to see (first through his “Mouse Trap” play, and then finally in the duel which brings the whole dramatic action to a resolution).⁴⁷ Macbeth never makes an attempt, through any kind of externalization, to uncover whether the witches speak the truth. He is in their theater of action; his mind never leaves their dreamscape. He does not have the skill of conscientious skepticism that Hamlet has to hold off the rule of ghosts and witches (as for example when he is visited at the banquet by Banquo’s ghost).⁴⁸

Hamlet makes use of his imagination to find out what is true so that he does not act on false information.⁴⁹ Macbeth is different. Despite the display of imaginative products (like blood on the hands that will not come off), Macbeth is less morally imaginative. He is so because he is not skeptical enough. I will say more about this in a minute.

Hamlet is afraid of and avoids the slip into evil. Richard III plunges in willingly. But what does Macbeth do? Does he *slip* to the other side?

The Slippery Slope Between Real and Unreal: Does Macbeth Have a Conscience or Is He in a Pre-Modern, Superstitious Dream?

Hegel on Macbeth

Alongside *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* is the Shakespearean play that Hegel discusses most in the *Aesthetics*. Hegel's reading of the play is problematic. Let me summarize, highlighting those passages in which Hegel unwittingly sets himself up for criticism.

First, Hegel cites Macbeth, alongside Othello and Richard III, as an example of characters driven to execute their ends "with the unshakeable logic of passion, *without any accompanying reflection or general principle*, solely for their own satisfaction."⁵⁰ Macbeth is a "character determined by his passion of ambition."⁵¹

At the start he hesitates, but then stretches out his hand to the crown, commits murder to get it, and, in order to maintain it, storms away through every atrocity. This reckless firmness, this identity of the man with himself and the end arising from his own decision, gives him an essential interest for us. Not respect for the majesty for the monarch, not the frenzy of his wife, not the defection of his vassals, not his impending destruction, nothing, neither divine nor human law, makes him falter or draw back; instead he persists in his course. Lady Macbeth is a similar character. . . .⁵²

Second, according to Hegel, Macbeth's fate is determined by his inward character. Thus "the achievement of the action is *eo ipso* a further development of the individual in his subjective inner life and not merely the march of events."⁵³

Third, despite his fate, Macbeth—like so many of Shakespeare's characters—has the depth of personality such that he remains a whole person to the end. We recall the passage of Hegel's in which Hegel praises Shakespeare "above them all" for "actually giv[ing] them spirit and imagination, and, by the picture in which they can contemplate and see themselves objectively like a work of art, . . . [making] them free artists of their own selves."⁵⁴ Hegel continues: "even if some purely single passion, like ambition in Macbeth . . . becomes the entire 'pathos' of his tragic heroes, still such an abstraction does not devour their more far-reaching individuality at all, because despite this determinant they still always remain complete men."⁵⁵ Their imagination distances them (and thereby loosens them from) their otherwise soul-rending condition.

Fourth, according to Hegel, the evil done by Macbeth is not in any way the witches' responsibility. The witches simply express Macbeth's inmost desire:

“the witches [are] only the poetic reflection of his own fixed will.”⁵⁶ Hegel lays the responsibility for what happens completely on Macbeth.

Fifth, Hegel discusses this responsibility in the context of religious superstition:

In the legends of the saints and generally on the ground of Christian ideas, the appearance of Christ, Mary, other saints, etc., is of course present in the universal faith; but alongside it imagination has built up for itself in related spheres all kinds of fantastic beings like witches, specters, ghostly apparitions, and more of the like. If in their treatment they appear as powers foreign to man, and man, with no stability in himself, obeys their magic, treachery, and the power of their delusiveness, the whole representation may be given over to every folly and the whole caprice of chance. In this matter in particular, the artist must go straight for the fact that freedom and independence of decision are continually reserved for man. Of this Shakespeare has afforded the finest examples. In *Macbeth*, for instance, the witches appear as external powers determining Macbeth's fate in advance. Yet what they declare is his most secret and private wish which comes home to him and is revealed to him in this only apparently external way.⁵⁷

Given the nightmarish character of *Macbeth*, its ghosts, and Lady Macbeth's somnambulism, it is ironic for Hegel to write of it as presenting one of those “wideawake situation(s) with fixed logical consequences” and to praise it in contrast to the modern plays by Kotzebue (whom Hegel hated) and Kleist, in which “magnetism, somnambulism, and nightmares are presented as what is supreme and most excellent.”⁵⁸ Hegel claims that these modern playwrights are not the disciples of Shakespeare that they claim to be, for Shakespeare's “characters are self-consistent; they remain true to themselves and their passion, and in what they are and in what confronts them they beat about according only to their own fixed determinacy of character.”⁵⁹

A sixth point is in connection with Macbeth's responsibility for his crimes. Hegel makes the historical point that Macbeth had a motivation that Shakespeare did not (indeed could not for political reasons) articulate in the play, but which is nonetheless, according to Hegel, really there. This point is made by Hegel in his first mention of Macbeth in the *Aesthetics*. It is in his section on “Collision” in the “Beauty of Art or the Ideal,” in the context of describing how dramatic collisions arise between rivals who are inheritors of the crown:

Duncan is king, Macbeth is next eldest relative and is therefore strictly heir to the throne even in preference to Duncan's sons.

And so the first inducement to Macbeth's crime is the wrong done to him by the King in naming his own son as his successor. This justification of Macbeth, drawn from [Holinshed's] *Chronicles*, is altogether omitted by Shakespeare, because his only aim was to bring out the dreadfulness of Macbeth's passion, in order to make a bow to King James who must have been interested in seeing Macbeth represented as a criminal!⁶⁰

A seventh reference points again to Macbeth's responsibility. In Hegel's discussion of the firmness of character, he writes that characters like Macbeth come to their dismal ends not as a response from the outside alone, but as a result of the development of their character. The more the individual comes up against obstacles, the more his or her passion drives to overcome the obstacles, and the more the individual succeeds, the more he brings on his doom.⁶¹ Thus

the achievement of the action is *eo ipso* a further development of the individual in his subjective inner life and not merely the march of events. The action of Macbeth, e.g., appears at the same time as a demoralization of his heart with a consequence which, once indecision ceases and the die is cast, can no longer be averted. . . .⁶²

In conclusion, we can see from Hegel's discussions about Macbeth how important the issue of responsibility is both in Hegel's conception of dramatic evil and in his conception of character (whether dramatic or not).

Contra Hegel

I disagree with Hegel's assessment of Macbeth, on Hegel's own terms (especially, as I show below, when we consider his account of the moral life in his *Encyclopedia Philosophy of Mind*). Hegel's claims about conscience and evil cannot allow him to claim that the witches are not responsible and that Macbeth is. For according to Hegel's definition of conscience, even though Macbeth is obviously bad, he is not evil in the modern sense, since he is not free. He is not free because he is under the sway of superstition. He is not acting within a moral sphere. He is acting within a pre-modern, religious one.⁶³

Despite Macbeth's firm individuality and the one-pointedness of his goal and the singleness of his passion, he is not a modern subjectivity. He does not possess the "infinite subjectivity" of the Hegelian moral man. The objects of his blurry deliberations are prophecies, dreams, and imaginary bodies like the floating dagger. These are what Hegel calls the "externalities" that corrupt the "free self-certain spirit."⁶⁴ In criticizing the Catholic Church, Hegel writes

God is in the “host” presented to religious adoration as an *external thing*. . . . From that first and supreme status of externalization flows every other phase of externality—of bondage, non-spirituality, and superstition. It leads to a laity, receiving its knowledge of divine truth, as well as the direction of its will and conscience from without and from another order . . . [an order which itself] requires an external consecration. It leads to the non-spiritual style of praying—partly as mere moving of the lips, partly in the way that the subject foregoes his right of directly addressing God, and pays others to pray—addressing his devotion to miracle-working images, even to bones, and expecting miracles from them. It leads, generally, to justification by external works, a merit which is supposed to be gained by acts, and even to be capable of being transferred to others. All this binds the spirit under an externalism by which the very meaning of spirit is perverted and misconceived at its *source*, and law and justice, morality and conscience, responsibility and duty are corrupted at their *root*.⁶⁵

Hegel writes elsewhere that the will of a superstitious man is a will without freedom.⁶⁶

The argument here is not that Macbeth’s problem stems from being Catholic (any more than Lady Macbeth’s insanity stems from being a woman).⁶⁷ Indeed Hegel can be wrong about Catholicism without being wrong about superstition’s corruptive effect. It is the *kind* of superstition Hegel is *attributing* to Catholicism that makes Macbeth, on Hegel’s terms here, someone who is not free or self-certain.

We recall that “in independent self-certainty, with its independence of knowledge and decision, both morality and evil have their common root.”⁶⁸ Corruption of that root disfigures the entire moral tree. In so far as Macbeth listens to the witches and believes them, Macbeth’s responsibility and duty have been “corrupted at their root.” (Bolingbroke succumbs to this sort of superstition when he turns to prophecy and a Crusade.) Macbeth himself is not in a “wide-awake situation with fixed logical consequences.”⁶⁹ He is in a dream-world with fluid consequences. Indeed this condition spreads across his kingdom: One character complains that “. . . [we] do not know ourselves; [we] . . . float upon a wild and violent sea / Each way and none.”⁷⁰ Donalbain asks: “What is amiss?” Macbeth answers: “You are, and do not know’t.”⁷¹

Contra Hegel, it is superstition that leads him to murder the King. Therefore, Macbeth’s decision and action do not occur in a wide-awake situation according to the logic of his passion. They are misguided wanderings within a corrupting dream.

As we have seen, the hallmark of infinite subjectivity is the complete independence of the self from the world. Out of that self-certainty arise both freedom and evil. That independence gives one the ability to say, as Iago does: "I am not what I am." This nonidentity is at the root of hypocrisy (in which one's inner self is different from one's public self). In Iago's statement, we see the full shape of his evil.⁷²

Macbeth never has this crisp recognition. It is his *world* that is at odds with itself. He swims in dreams: "My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical, / Shakes so my single state of man that function / Is smothered in surmise, and nothing is / But what is not."⁷³

Hegel oddly suggests that the degree to which "an evil action has been done with a conscience more or less downright evil—all these questions are the more trivial aspect of the matter, the aspect mainly concerned with the empirical."⁷⁴ If we are dealing with a slippage, the degree is of more consequence than Hegel is allowing. For at a certain point in an individual's developmental rise *up* the slope from murky self-certainty to conscience, that individual reaches the capacity not only for making negative infinite judgments, but for scoping the "kingdom" from a position of negative freedom. Only then do we have the possibility of good or of evil. Before that, there is ambiguity, a murky pool in which characters—regardless of the singleness of their passion—slide around, neither good nor evil.

Hegel writes that "what shatters Macbeth after he has done the deed is a storm from without."⁷⁵ I think that Macbeth is lost from the start: He never exits the dreamscape that makes up the fabric of the play. None of its characters are fully awake—witness Lady Macbeth's nightmarish account of her willingness to blast her suckling child's skull on a rock,⁷⁶ or the mystifying way Macduff slides from hearing the terrible story of his family's murder (a story that would plunge any awake person into insurmountable grief) to his sense of noble enterprise in avenging them and saving the kingdom from the tyranny of Macbeth. It is all in one pot with toads' feet and witches brew. This is not the stuff of logic; and it is too heavy a draught for conscience.

According to Hegel, evil requires the formal, infinite subjectivity of the free and self-certain will.⁷⁷ But Macbeth is not an infinite subjectivity. Strictly speaking, therefore, unlike Richard III, Macbeth is not evil.

The Case of Macbeth Raises Problems for Hegel's Theories

Hegel's reading of *Macbeth* is incompatible with Hegel's theories of conscience and evil. A first possible conclusion is the following: (1) The inconsistency is not in Hegel's theory about Macbeth but rather in his theory about formal conscience and evil. That is, perhaps conscience does not require the Germanic moment of the self-certainty and freedom of formal conscience. If it does not, this puts into question Hegel's shift from morality (formal conscience) to ethi-

cal life (true conscience). This possibility suggests that Hegel is too committed to his idea of responsibility and freedom to accept more complex relationships between various kinds of conscience, evil and dreams to which his own use of the word "slip" bears witness.

There is a second possible conclusion: (2) There is no problem with Hegel's notion of formal conscience or of its being a precondition for evil, nor is there a problem with Hegel's identification of conscience with morality and thus with modernity. The problem is that Hegel wrongly conceives *Macbeth* to be a *modern* tragedy. He is led to this error because he wrongly assigns a modern subjectivity, with its level of freedom and responsibility, to Macbeth.

To investigate this, let us turn briefly to A. C. Bradley's essay "Hegel's Theory of Drama." While celebrating much in Hegel's theory of tragedy, Bradley claims that there are a number of things wrong with it. Let us focus on those things which, according to Bradley, are particularly well illustrated by *Macbeth*.

Bradley writes that "the play [*Macbeth*] seems at first to represent a conflict simply of good and evil, and so, according . . . to Hegel's statement . . . , to be no tragedy at all."⁷⁸ Bradley explains that even when we dig deeper into the conflict in the play, *Macbeth* does not fall into Hegel's definition of an ancient or of a modern tragedy. It is not ancient because the play's central conflict "does not lie between two ethical powers or universal ends, and . . . as Hegel says, the main interest is in personalities."⁷⁹ Bradley does not directly explain why it is does not fall into Hegel's definition of a modern tragedy. But the implication from the rest of Bradley's argument is that it does not because Hegel's theory of tragedy, even with its distinction between ancient and modern, does not adequately deal with the kinds of subjective suffering, the range of conflicts and endings, and the self-wasting that can be present in tragedy and that are present in *Macbeth*.

Bradley proposes restating Hegel's theory of tragedy in a different way. He illustrates the necessity for this by revealing a deeper reading of *Macbeth* (deeper than the one that he suggested above, i.e., that it is "a conflict simply of good and evil"). According to Bradley, the restatement, alongside the deeper reading, reveals the true way in which *Macbeth* is a tragedy. Let us look at the restatement and then the deeper reading.

Bradley's restatement is the following: "tragedy portrays a self-division and self-waste of spirit, or a division of spirit involving conflict and waste."⁸⁰ With regard to providing a deeper reading of *Macbeth*, Bradley explains that this restatement works better than Hegel's theory. For in *Macbeth* (as in *Hamlet*) the tragic effect

... depends on our feeling that the elements in the man's nature are so inextricably blended that the good in him, that which we admire, instead of simply opposing the evil, reinforces it. Macbeth's

imagination deters him from murder, but it also makes the vision of a crown irresistibly bright. If he had been less determined, nay if his conscience had been less maddening in its insistence that he had thrown the precious jewel of his soul irretrievably away, he might have paused after his first deed, might even have repented. Yet his imagination, his determination, and his conscience were things good. . . . Thus the nature of tragedy, as seen in the external conflict, repeats itself on each side of this conflict, and everywhere there is a spiritual value in both the contending forces.⁸¹

According to Bradley, then, the tragic nature of the play *Macbeth* is self-waste and self-division of spirit, and the site of this in *Macbeth* is Macbeth's imagination and conscience.

Now, Bradley's theory is insightful. But Bradley has not chosen to keep Hegel's view that conscience and evil presuppose modern subjective freedom. In Bradley's account, Macbeth clearly has a conscience. Bradley also holds that evil exists independently of conscience.⁸² Therefore, if we accept Bradley's argument, we must abandon Hegel's definition of conscience and of evil.

But we can choose to preserve Hegel's definition of conscience and evil and their relationship to morality and modernity. If we do, then the problem lies not with conscience or evil but with Hegel's reading of *Macbeth* as a modern play in which conscience and evil are at work.

Let us follow this line of thought. In Hegel's theory of modern tragedy, it is the individual and his subjective pathos which, in colliding with the world, drives the plot to its tragic conclusion. But if conscience is necessarily part of that modern subjective pathos, then, since Macbeth has no conscience, *Macbeth* cannot be a modern tragedy.

Let us revisit Hegel's ancient-modern distinction. The play seems to have elements of both ancient and modern without falling completely into either. Is there a way to push it more in one direction or another? Macbeth is motivated by a more subjective, egotistical pathos than Antigone. In that respect, the play is more modern than ancient. But I have argued above that that subjective pathos (as opposed to a universal imaginary duty) does not mean that conscience is at work. Furthermore, there is the oracular nature of the witches. In these respects, the play is more like an ancient tragedy.

But, as Bradley states, *Macbeth* is clearly not about a conflict of universal forces and so it cannot, on Hegel's definition, be an ancient tragedy either. If not modern or ancient, then what kind of tragedy is *Macbeth*?

Let us revisit Bradley. He asserts that, at the heart of the tragedy of *Macbeth*, there lies the strife between the good and the bad of Macbeth's imagination. It is true that Macbeth suffers acutely because of his imagination.

But I reply that every tragedy is, to some extent, a tragedy of the imagination. For drama has for its ground the phenomenological nature of consciousness; and consciousness, especially expressed in art, is a function of *Vorstellung*, whose middle moment is the imagination.⁸³ This is so whether the imagination belongs to that of an ancient Greek consciousness or to a modern consciousness.⁸⁴ From the start of this book, we have been concerned with conflicts of imagination. So, as interesting as Bradley's argument is within its own set of assumptions, defining *Macbeth* as a tragedy of imagination does not help us overcome the inconsistency in Hegel.⁸⁵

In our discussion, the defining question is whether Macbeth has a conscience and whether he is evil and in what way he is therefore responsible. If Hegel thinks that modern drama requires its characters to have consciences, it is wrong to think that Macbeth's tragic character is modern. Hegel is therefore wrong to discuss the play as a modern tragedy.

If the play cannot be ancient or modern, and if it we cannot adopt Bradley's conclusion (mostly because it disregards Hegel's conception of conscience, but also because it points to something—the character's imagination—which is, to some extent, common to all tragedies), then we are left with the following conclusion. *Macbeth* is simply a *pre-modern* tragedy.

At this point, I must leave to the reader any further consideration of Bradley's contribution to Hegel's theory of tragedy, as well as further discussion of the historical category of tragedy into which *Macbeth* falls. Our engagement with all of this has been in the service of a larger concern, namely, the need to discuss the relationship between responsibility, conscience, the good, and evil in princely consciousnesses. As I discuss below in relation to Henry V, what is important in our discussion of *Macbeth* is the role of superstition and the fact that, if we keep Hegel's theory of formal conscience, we cannot apply it to Macbeth. Macbeth is wicked, but not evil.

Part IV. Conclusion about Princely Conscience and Evil

We have looked at three princes, none of whom actually *slip* into evil. Richard III has a conscience but dismisses it as a "babbling dream."⁸⁶ Richard III doesn't slip, he happily turns coat. Hamlet is afraid of slipping into evil, so he interrogates his thoughts and his ghost. Macbeth does not interrogate his ghosts because he has not got the skepticism or modern force of subjectivity that require it; he therefore is neither in possession of a conscience, nor properly evil. Macbeth is already in the murky badness into which someone who does slip, slips. He himself does not slip because he was never at a high enough rational standpoint from which to slip.

Richard III's failure of moral imagination is that he stays with the undeveloped productive imagination of his ego's freedom to construct reality. Hamlet's *achievement* of moral imagination is his skepticism: through it he creates social forms of imagination that reveal truth and which therefore, for the most part, prevent rash action. Hamlet's *failure* of moral imagination is that he does not take his imagination far enough.⁸⁷ Macbeth's failure of moral imagination is that he is not capable of negating the dreamscape of superstition.

As I mentioned, Bradley (and Snider, an American Hegelian) conclude that the play *Macbeth* is a "Tragedy of the Imagination."⁸⁸ I argued briefly against this on the grounds that all of Shakespeare's plays (indeed all art) is for Hegel already about the imagination. We can support this further by pointing to Hegel's use of Macbeth as an example of Shakespeare's ability to give his characters imagination: Shakespeare lifts

his criminal characters above their evil passion by endowing them with a greatness of spirit alike in crime and in misfortune . . . [*by giving*] . . . *them the force of imagination* which enables them to see themselves not just as themselves but as another shape strange to them. *Macbeth*, e.g., when his hour has struck utters the famous words:

"Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing."⁸⁹

Macbeth is not unimaginative. Rather, his imagination portrays very clearly the desolation of his imagination. To the extent that Macbeth *believes* his imagination (as he believed the witches), Macbeth does not see his imagination at work. In this respect, he is dreaming. And in this respect, again, he is not a responsible, self-conscious agent. To have a conscience is to know that you are always, in some respect, in a dream of your own making. Conscience is one stage in the process of thinking through one's imagination.

The hypocrite who *slips* into evil is the one *who fools himself*. A hypocrite has to have the infinite distance from the world: He has to be able to say that he is not who he is, he has to have formal conscience in order to choose his private particular ends freely over social ends, and he has to persuade others that he is pursuing the latter while knowingly pursuing the former. To fool himself he needs, further, to believe that his pursuit of his own ends is also the pursuit of the social good. He has to put this on as a show and be convinced by it.

The self-deceiving hypocrite maintains Richard III's egoism, abandons Hamlet's skepticism, and slips into Macbeth's realm of dreams.

Part V. Conclusion: Henry V is a
Self-Deceiving Hypocritical Sovereign

“I think the king is but a man, as I am.”

—disguised King Harry, *Henry V*⁹⁰

In One Way, Henry V Does Not Slip; Like Richard III, He Chooses

Henry V, because he is a man of the moon, knows the relationship between the thieving, contingent world of the night, and the sunlight of the day. We recall Hal's soliloquy at Eastcheap:

Yet herein will I imitate the sun,
Who doth permit the base contagious clouds
To smother up his beauty from the world,
That when he please again to be himself,
Being wanted he may be more wondered at
By breaking through the foul and ugly mists
Of vapours that did seem to strangle him.⁹¹

Hal chooses to take cover in the social fog of Eastcheap. It is as if he dreamt it up, keeping himself and others in that dream until his sun could shine through. It is a dream he casts off when he rejects Falstaff: “I have long dreamt of such a kind of man, / So surfeit-swelled, so old, and so profane; / But being awake, I do despise my dream.”⁹²

His Eastcheap soliloquy is hypocritical only if one considers Hal's friendships there substantial. Schlegel thought otherwise. He thought Hal was just being a good Machiavellian prince, that Hal was just biding his time, entertaining himself with schemes to fend off the boredom that these thieves made him feel, that as ruler he was obliged to reject them and their way of life.⁹³

But it is clear that Hal *is* hypocritical to his friends at Eastcheap. He tells us so in his soliloquy. Furthermore, he shared in their witty view that honor and virtue were but a show; he shared in their playful counterfeiting of identities. Unlike Richard II, Hal never believed in unreflected virtues like honor, courage, and god-given powers. He is no barbaric hero. So when he tells Eastcheap and the rest of the world that he is not one of them, that he is instead a virtuous, chivalrous king, and when he raises the banner of patriotism and brotherhood before battle, Henry V is just as much a hypocrite as he was at Eastcheap during his soliloquy.

It seems, on the one hand, that (unlike his father and unlike Macbeth) Henry V is not in the sway of externalities (superstition). He is free and thus fully responsible for his actions. Hal's conscience has not “slipped” into evil:

He freely chooses evil. He rejects and uses that rejection to his advantage. He appears to be like Richard III.

And yet, there is a way in which Henry V is fooled by himself.

Hal's Dream

Henry V's will to power motivates him *consciously*. But his desire to establish his right to rule is an *unconscious* motivator. He has something of a Macbeth dream in him. (And insofar as his society lets him get away with it, so does it.)

Macbeth is motivated by a social unconsciousness—by superstition. Macbeth does not fool himself—he believes.⁹⁴ Henry V is involved in a psychosocial unconscious structure similar to superstition. By means of it, he fools himself. Once Henry V has rejected the bad “dream” of Falstaff,⁹⁵ he and his royal subjects think that he is a sovereign good will in a good world. But Henry V is really still in a dream, a dream other than the one he claims to have just shaken off.

In one respect, Hal's real dream consists in being limited by the time of the play. Shakespeare and his audience know that despite the apparent happy ending of *Henry V*, history will continue and Henry V's happy reign will end. Henry V, the character, operates within the artificial unity of dramatic time.

More importantly, Henry V is in a self-deceptive dream. His dream is that he is redeeming time. The war and other evils that he chooses are means to this redemptive end. He is convinced this is good for his kingdom. In pursuit of that goal, he makes rejecting theft his virtue, and he appeals to the social bonds of patriotism and of brotherhood. We have seen how these actions are hypocritical. So in doing them *while* thinking his hypocrisy good, he is a hypocrite who fools himself.

It might be objected that he chose lesser evils as means to the good. But what makes Henry V's actions self-deceptive is that his perceived “good” (his desire to be a just and virtuous king) is not really good: His war leads to the death of thousands; his campaign to become king of France reveals a Machiavelian will to power. But the *self-deceptive* thing is his need for entitlement to the crown of *England*. Let me explain.

Henry V's justification for his sovereignty in France is that France stole the crown from England. In truth, this theory is a symptom of Henry V's lineage angst: It is a reversal of and answer to his father's (Bolingbroke's) anxiety that he (Bolingbroke) was not entitled to the crown. If Bolingbroke was not entitled to the crown, the son of Bolingbroke (Hal) is not legitimately king. It is a brilliant, unconscious maneuver on the part of Hal as Henry V to establish his own right to rule *on a platform of denying crime*. Henry V has a long line of thieves whom he rejects: Falstaff, the traitors who would steal his crown, Bardolph, the King of France. He makes himself entitled by being the man

who ferrets out the remnants of crime in the kingdom (unconsciously, the crime of his father's theft of the crown). His need to redeem time is deeply personal, indeed, its source is not conscious to him. His *conscious* sovereign status is that he is the man who negates negative infinite judgments.

What is needed for true justification (that is, for justice to be done on the part of the sovereign) is not *simple negation* of negative infinite judgments, but rather *sublation* of them into a higher order. I return to this next chapter.

Macbeth commits regicide as a means to fulfill the *prophecy* of his sovereignty. He conceives of his kingship as a desirable good for himself. Henry V conceives his desire to rule as a genuine good for all, because it appears to be virtue's control of contingency. Time appears redeemed as the circle closes: Henry V's sovereign self-certainty looks virtuous *because* he rejects the changeable and unruly.⁹⁶ Nietzsche, though not speaking of Henry V, gives the perfect description of this kind of self-deception:

The proud awareness of the extraordinary privilege of *responsibility*, the consciousness of this rare freedom, this power over oneself and over fate, has in this case penetrated to the profoundest depths and become instinct, the dominating instinct. What will he call this dominating instinct, supposing he feels the need to give it a name? The answer is beyond doubt: this sovereign man calls it his conscience.⁹⁷

Henry V's desire to redeem time, to close its circle with sovereign justification, is tinged with a fatal flaw. By engaging his society in the dream that he commands contingency from outside, he has turned contingency on itself. All values pivot on his point of honor. Since that point is self-deceptive, values slip into their opposites. Thus, finally, Henry V is the inverted world of *Spirit*.⁹⁸ In his sovereign dream-world, wrong appears right and right appears wrong; the subjective sovereign self appears to be the brotherhood of all; and the jolly body of witty excess becomes "so surfeit-swelled, so old, and so profane."

What is particularly pernicious is that Henry V's evil of conscience is a societal pathology. It views inordinately extreme punishment (hanging Bardolph, or in our society, torture) as a means to secure power over contingency. It is by means of that social dreamscape that Henry V is able to achieve his goal. The lessons of *Henry V* for our day are obvious.

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Section 3

Sovereign Wit and the End of Alienation

(Chapter 10)

In the previous chapters of Part II, we saw first how a sovereign self became alienated when it did not recognize the social shape of its power; we then saw how self-consciousness about the multiple negative determinations of cultural perspectives and entities gave rise to wit as both symptom of and partial cure for alienation; we analyzed those “crimes” against culture and language in terms of negative infinite judgments; and finally, we traced the difficult route through Henry V’s evil pageantry. We concluded that the sovereign self that is self-certain in its self-deception is the nadir of justice since it portrays tyranny and war as the right of the virtuous. Henry V did not redeem time.

In Chapter 10, we look at what might constitute justice (a real social “redemption of time”), and whether it necessarily involves a religious standpoint. We conclude that the necessary starting point of justice is forgiveness.

In Part I of this chapter, we begin with Lukács’ claim that for Hegel, ethical life is necessarily and irredeemably tragic. I investigate whether social redemption through punishment and pardon in Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right* provides a counter to Lukács’ claim.

In Part II of this chapter, I contrast Henry V’s punishing solutions with Hegel’s theory of monarchic pardon (in the *Philosophy of Right*). Monarchic pardon is a higher form of justice than mere policymaking. This sublating activity of subjectivity is a positive, rationalizing force in the State, one that destabilizes while providing the means of moving forward in ethical life. Nonetheless, even when the State has achieved the status of being a “rational organism,” the internal possibilities of crime and evil and the role of war as

a necessary destabilizing force at the international level show that, in Hegel's account, Objective Spirit remains permeated by tragedies.

I conclude Part II of this chapter by expanding the notion of pardon into the following assertion: The philosophical truth of monarchic pardon is that forgiveness must be a part of every person's ethical behavior. The concept of pardon (and its pervasive social character as forgiveness) has therefore opened up a new vantage point for redemption. It invokes an absolute standpoint that is not that of the State but rather that of Absolute Spirit.

Hegel claims that pardon imports a religious standpoint into Objective Spirit. This leads us to question whether forgiveness imports a religious standpoint into Absolute Spirit (i.e., into Art and Philosophy as well as Religion); whether forgiveness inaugurates a wit that is not limited to religion. In other words, for Hegel and for Shakespeare, what is the nature of a successful redemption of time?

In Part III of this chapter, I begin answering these questions.¹ I do so by looking at the last of the History plays: *Henry VIII*. In that play, we find, on the one hand, Cardinal Wolsey. He is a man who benefits from staging political conflict. On the other hand, at the end of the play, there is a movement away from political conflict and alienation. Forgiveness sweeps through the court. The end point of that movement is the baptism of Princess Elizabeth.

Henry VIII moves from a series of tragedies to a happy ending. It is therefore a fitting segue to the final two chapters of our book. There, we show how Shakespeare's Romance plays, and Hegelian phenomenology, turn the "tragedy of ethical life" into the comedy of "Absolute Spirit."

Chapter 10

Negation of the Negative Infinite Judgment vs. Sublation of It

Punishment vs. Pardon in *The Philosophy of Right* and *Henry VIII*

Part I. Is The “Play” of History Necessarily Tragic?

Our discussion of the role of the negative in *The Philosophy of Right* showed that negation as a moment of sublation is essential to the development of society. Lukács holds that for Hegel, evil is the moment that continuously pushes the status quo to overcome itself: There can be no end to it.² Lukács claims therefore, that for the young Hegel, the final shape of ethical life is tragic.³

We must investigate whether Lukács’ Marxist reading of Hegel’s externalities is the final story.⁴ According to Hegel, there are forms of sublation that help society to redeem itself. The questions then become whether we must always pass through tragedy on the way to such redemptions or whether there is a final form of redemption after which no more tragedy needs to be passed through, or again, whether a standpoint arises in which tragedy occurring on one level is not tragic on another level.

To begin answering these questions, let us look at social redemptions in *The Philosophy of Right*.

Social Redemptions: Punishment and Pardon

According to Hegel, there are means of nullifying criminal and evil diremptions in the social will: These antisocial acts are either punished or pardoned. Both are accomplished through ethical *institutions*. In other words, according to

Hegel, punishment and pardon are the internal acts of an organically developed, rational community of individuals.

Punishment Is Restitution of Rights for the Criminal and for the State

Hegel asserts that punishment of crime is the nullification of the diremption of will from the good.⁵ It occurs on the side of the criminal and on the side of the State. Both criminal and State, before punishment, are one-sided. The criminal requires judicial punishment in order to make him recognize the social web of laws governing rights. Punishment is a negation of the negation that crime is. It benefits the criminal because it reasserts the universal against what has become separated from it.

When the right against crime has the form of revenge . . . , it is only right implicit, not right in the form of right, i.e. no *act* of revenge is justified. Instead of the injured party, the injured *universal* now comes on the scene, and this has its proper actuality in the court of law. It takes over the pursuit and the avenging of crime, and this pursuit consequently ceases to be the subjective and contingent retribution of revenge and is transformed into the genuine reconciliation of right with itself, i.e. into punishment. Objectively, this is the reconciliation of the law with itself; by the annulment of the crime, the law is restored and its authority is thereby actualised. Subjectively, it is the reconciliation of the criminal with himself, i.e. with the law known by him as his own and as valid for him and his protection; when this law is executed upon him, he himself finds in this process the satisfaction of justice and nothing save his own act.⁶

(This movement from being revenged upon to being punished is the movement Claudius did not get to make.)

The nullification occurs equally on the side of the State. Not only is the State one-sided before the punishment, the State is one-sided before the first *crime* (of any type of crime). The first crime reveals the State's one-sidedness. Left unpunished, the State is divided against itself (in and through the criminal). The alienation in and through crime is necessary to prevent the State from being merely implicit, unmediated, unconscious, immediate universality. The State is only truly itself once it has overcome the possibility of its being a mere show of unity. Once the State's one-sidedness is revealed, the contradiction is resolved by addressing the crime by devising laws that adequately deal with the problem and by addressing the perpetrator by means of punishment. The universal thereby comes back to itself out of its own implicit (now realized) alienation.

Crime and the punishment of crime are supposed to wake us from the immediacy of abstract right to our moral selves. In righting wrong, punishment reestablishes right in a more complex way than mere assertion of immediate right did; it establishes right in a way that is more adequate to the reality of our ability to choose. Punishment recognizes and incorporates our negative infinite judgment within it. The ideal sought is that the crime not be repeated.

But punishment alone is not the level at which such repetition is forestalled. Bolingbroke viewed the imprisonment of Richard II as a punishment. It had the effect of shaking Richard out of his unjustified sovereign self-impression. But Bolingbroke could not escape the logic of his own sovereign morality. He thought there was divine punishment against himself for the murder of Richard II. He took that punishment to be the retrograde behavior of Hal and the treason of his erstwhile confidants.

Punishment, like the crime that elicits it, signals the incommensurability between what is and what ought to be. Punishment dissolves criminality into morality. But that is as far as it can go: Punishment does not get us out of the moral standpoint to something higher. It does not because we simply continue to apply the law to those who break it and to devise new laws for new crimes. Furthermore, as in conscience, a law can be construed by others as having been motivated by a *particular* rather than a universal goal. In that case, punishment is discriminatory and evil. Such was Bolingbroke's problem with regard to Richard II.

The transition from immediate right to moral crime and punishment is therefore limited. There is a higher transition: namely, from that morally conceived incommensurability to the unity of ethical life in the State. That is the dissolution of evil into ethical life.⁷

This second transition cannot occur through punishment, and it has to involve the monarch. What is to be sublated in this transition is the pure subjective will (the conscience that can slip into evil). The monarch is the *institution* in which such a will is sublated.

Monarchic Pardon in Hegel's Philosophy of Right.

According to Hegel, it is the monarch who most fully represents the principle of *infinite subjectivity* of State power. On the one hand, we must not confuse this subjectivity with that of the civilian, that subjectivity which "is itself the absolute form and existent actuality of the substantial order."⁸ The civilian is the modern individual who exhibits rectitude (of being at-home in his or her position in society). As infinite subjectivity of the State, the monarch has power to grant pardon; the civilian does not. On the other, as we will see below, the monarch's subjectivity is nonetheless an institution of the State and therefore one part of the organism without which the monarch would not be able to

exist. For now, let us look at his infinite subjectivity as the power he has to grant pardon.

My argument is that punishment is the sublation of crime into the moral order, and that pardon is the sublation of evil into ethical life. Policy is the established order of rational law: It is based on negating negative infinite judgments. But pardon *reflects* the negative infinite judgment into itself. Since the monarch has the ability to override the State's juridical and executive decision to punish, he commits a "crime" against policy. Hegel explains:

The right to pardon criminals arises from the sovereignty of the monarch, since it is this alone which is empowered *to actualize mind's power of making undone what has been done* and wiping out a crime by forgiving and forgetting it.⁹

The monarch is not just countering an arbitrary event or punishing a crime; he is undoing what has been done—undoing the *deed*. We can play on both senses of the deed here: It is the deed as action and the deed as lawful ownership of something (moral law governing rights); both are undone by the act of pardon.

Pardon is a reflection rather than sheer negation, because through his negation, the monarch restores the moment of self-determination to the whole. He counters the threat of dissolution that comes from negations on the part of particular members of society. The State, by conferring negative power on *part of its constitution* (that is, by making pure subjectivity a capacity of the institution of the crown) preserves unity over dissembling diversity.

Hegel goes on in the Remark to assert that "The right of pardon is one of the highest recognitions of the majesty of mind."¹⁰ We must look at exactly what "majesty of mind" means.

According to Hegel, pardon is the application of a higher category to a lower one, specifically, the application of religion to politics.¹¹ In acting from within a religious category, Hegel's pardoning monarch steps out of the political world and into one of the three forms of Absolute Spirit (Art, Religion, and Philosophy). Pardon is an exercise of Absolute Spirit in the ethical life of the State.

Hegel does not write this, but it is evident that the monarch is not just the majesty of mind. He is also the figurehead of the majesty of mind. In other words, he represents the possibility of forgiveness. I will return to this.

Summary of Society's Self-Redemptions

In Hegel's political philosophy, crime and evil are necessary dialectical *possibilities* for the ethical life of the State. These bad things are necessary negative moments.

Without at least their presence as potential crimes and evils, the determinations of morality, and later, of ethical life, would be impossible.

In the rational State, these negativities are necessarily suppressed by individuals and by the executive powers. Their suppression does not mean that their possibility disappears. Freedom is characterized by the ability to do evil if we choose, so the free State cannot do without the possibility of evil. It is in the confrontation of institutions with potential and real crime and evil that institutions become as rationally complex as they need to be to express the freedom of individuals.¹² Punishment sublates crime; pardon sublates evil. Punishment creates and maintains moral policy; pardon makes ethical life possible. It is only in acting as a part of the rational whole that the infinite, subjective act of pardon makes political sense.

Part II. Henry V Compared to Hegel's Monarch: Are Both To Be Viewed Ironically?

Let Us Play Devil's Advocate

First, Henry V's punishment of hanging Bardolph for his petty theft was consistent with the times. In Shakespeare's life, State retaliation for stepping out of line was out of all humane proportion: Being burned at the stake for one's religious beliefs was common practice. In fact, Bardolph got off lightly. Greenblatt recounts the following tale of punitive horror:

On May 30, 1582, [Cottam, a Catholic, experienced] the full rage of the state: he was dragged on a hurdle through the muddy streets of Tyburn, past jeering crowds, and then hanged, taken down while he was still alive, and castrated; his stomach was then slit open and his intestines pulled out to be burned before his dying eyes, whereupon he was beheaded and his body cut in quarters, the pieces displayed as a warning.¹³

It is hardly right to question why a medieval monarchic character, on the theatrical stage in these horrible times, is not more dialectically speculative.

Second, an ironic stance is the appropriate stance to take toward any State. According to Bloom and Yeats, Shakespeare watched Henry V with ironic detachment.¹⁴ Bloom comes to this conclusion after discussing Shakespeare's resistance to State: "Shakespeare cared little for the State, the source of all our judgments, apart from its shows and splendors, its turmoils and battles, its flamings-out of the uncivilized heart."¹⁵

When Shakespeare thought of the state, he remembered first that it had murdered Christopher Marlowe, tortured and broken Thomas

Kyd, and branded the unbreakable Ben Jonson. All that and more underlies the great lament in Sonnet 66:

“And right perfection wrongfully disgraced,
And strength by limping sway disabled,
And art made tongue-tied by authority”

Bloom continues:

The censor, external and internal, haunted Shakespeare, made cautious by Marlowe's terrible end. I agree, therefore, with Yeats' conclusion, which is that Henry V, for all its exuberance, is essentially ironic: “Shakespeare watched Henry V . . . cheerfully, as one watches some handsome spirited horse, and he spoke his tale, as he spoke all tales, with tragic irony.”¹⁶

Third, Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* (and thus his declared culmination of Objective Spirit) is, like *Henry V*, a dramatic pageantry and an ironic tragedy. First of all, it is nowhere to be found in the actual world. Secondly, we can only watch Hegel's monarch with irony. For Hegel's monarch could use pardon to exercise his *particularity*, forgiving certain kinds of people whom he draws around him in a circle of power. He could thus become an evil force within the State. Hegel might reply that princely power would be tightly controlled within the constitution. But in that case, the prince would have the right to pardon, but the extent of his use of this right would be limited. It would be the institutions and not the prince who decided who got to be pardoned because the limit on pardoning would fall where the State decided. The purely subjective character of princely pardoning would be nullified. Pardon is therefore negation of negation, not sublation. It is no more sublation than punishment is. Hegel has simply replaced “conscience” with “the State constitution.” The constitution is now the one that is capable of slipping into evil.¹⁷

Reply to the Devil's Advocate

First, the argument that as King, Hal could no longer be a partisan to crime has merit. But the excessiveness of his punishment of Bardolph is *recognized* to be such by fellow soldiers.¹⁸ Even if a pardon was out of the question, some leniency derived from a sense of pardon would have been appropriate. Hal was clearly motivated by his own desire to make himself shine against his former reputation (and shine against all inherited evils of his lineage). It was within his power as king to admonish and then pardon. Instead, Henry V uses the moment to punish, establish a new law, and establish himself as the maker of laws:

Henry V: "We would have all such offenders so cut off: and we give express charge, that in our marches through the country, there be nothing compelled from the villages, nothing taken but paid for, none of the French upbraided or abused in disdainful language; for when lenity and cruelty play for a kingdom, the gentler gamester is the soonest winner."¹⁹

Bloom writes that "Falstaff is mind, while Henry is but policy."²⁰ A question we asked long ago was: What does Henry V lose by rejecting the men of the moon? We can answer this now: Henry V has preserved policy and lost the majesty of mind. With that, he loses the possibility of developing what I call a *universal* wit.²¹

Second, it might have been appropriate for Shakespeare to *express* an ironic stance toward his character and his time. Perhaps he was not politically safe enough to express his real thoughts. But inwardly, he must have condemned his character Henry V as much as the censorship that forced his hand in the development of that character (and of the play by that name).²² It could be argued that the structure of Shakespeare's last History play and of his later Romance plays gave him a way out of this ironic stance. The extent to which politics defined Shakespeare's art is for the historians to debate. My point, argued below, is that there are artistic and philosophical reasons (i.e., reasons linked to what Hegel calls "Absolute Spirit") for the change in genres that we see when we move from *Richard II* and the *Henry IV* plays, through *Henry V*, to *Henry VIII*.

Hegel hated irony.²³ He would have rejected an ironic view of his rational State. According to him, irony provides a subjective, one-sided position with regard to the whole.

Therefore, third, the fact that Hegel's State is not in existence is no argument against the rationality of it. (It is also therefore no argument for its being pure pageantry. The internal dialectical development of its moments makes us balk at such a suggestion, even if we do not ultimately agree with Hegel.) Hegel is expressing the *Idea* of the State.

Furthermore, according to Hegel's conception of constitutional monarchy, there is no possibility of the monarch using his power of pardon for particular evil ends. On the contrary, in the majesty of the monarch

lies the actual unity of the state, and it is only through this, its inward and outward immediacy, that the unity of the state is saved from the risk of being drawn down into the sphere of particularity and its caprices, ends, and opinions, and saved too from the war of factions round the throne and from the enfeeblement and overthrow of the power of the state.²⁴

(How dear this idea would have been to Bolingbroke!) This is an important issue. Let us pause to investigate it further.

The Constitutional Monarch

As we stated above, according to Hegel, the monarch of the constitutional State is an *institution*. Insofar as he is the infinite subjectivity of the State, the monarch seems to be above and beyond the world. But this is not the subjectivity that slips into evil: It is a subjectivity that unites the subjective with the objective, the inward and the outward. Hegel's explanation of this lies, on the one hand, in the idea that the constitution is rational, and on the other, in his theory that the crown should be inherited naturally through natural birth. Let us look at each of these in turn.

THE RATIONAL STATE AS CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY²⁵

Insofar as the State is fully self-conscious of its universality, it is rational. The State is "ethical mind *qua* the substantial will manifest and revealed to itself, knowing and thinking itself, accomplishing what it knows and in so far as it knows it."²⁶

The State is a dialectical unity of its parts. Each member acts to sustain the whole, and the whole sustains its members. "This substantial unity is an absolute unmoved end in itself, in which freedom comes into its supreme right. On the other hand this final end has supreme right against the individual, whose supreme duty is to be a member of the state."²⁷

Individuals in the State achieve their rational freedom by willing the universal end of the State. "The state is the actuality of concrete freedom."²⁸ In the ethical State, the *particularity* of individuals has been reached and it is united with the whole. The strength of the State "lies in the unity of its own universal end and aim with the particular interest of individuals, in the fact that individuals have duties to the state in proportion as they have rights against it."²⁹ Unlike the romantic lover for whom there is a separation of the sphere of subjectivity from objective unities (of family and civil life), in the rational State the spheres are thoroughly inter-determining. The ethical truth of individual freedom is that it is fully expressed only in and through the whole.

According to Hegel, the State is a political body. The "moments" of the State are the State's "flexible limbs" while the State "is their single self."³⁰ In the "unity" of the State, the particular powers have their authority only as part of "the order and breadth determined by the Idea of the whole."³¹

The "body politic" is not entirely a metaphor. Hegel repeatedly refers to the State as an organism: for example, the constitution is the "organization" and

“self-related process of its [the State’s] organic life.”³² Similarly, “the monarch is the absolute apex of an organically developed state.”³³

Hegel divides the State into three “substantive divisions:”

the power to determine and establish the universal—the
Legislature
the power to subsume single cases and the spheres of particularity
under the universal—the Executive;
the power of subjectivity, as the will with the power of ultimate
decision—the Crown. In the crown, the different powers are
bound into an individual unity which is thus at once the apex
and basis of the whole, i.e., of constitutional monarchy.³⁴

Hegel begins discussing these three by discussing the third—the Crown. He does this because “the crown contains in itself the three moments of the whole.”³⁵

All functionaries of the State (including the crown) do what they do as members of the State, not as solitary persons. This is consistent with the fact that we long ago left the immediacy of unmediated claims to right. Hegel clarifies here that “the functions and powers of the state cannot be private property.”³⁶

Thus Hegel’s definition of State sovereignty (at least at home, with regard to itself as opposed to with regard to other States) is the following:

Sovereignty depends on the fact that the particular functions and powers of the state are not self-subsistent or firmly grounded either on their own account or in the particular will of the individual functionaries, but have their roots ultimately in the unity of the state as their single self.³⁷

For Hegel, sovereignty and State are inseparable. The crown is “the absolute universality” but it “subsists *subjectively* in the conscience of the monarch *and objectively* in the whole of the constitution and the laws. Hence the power of the crown presupposes the other moments in the state just as it is presupposed by each of them.”³⁸ How do we now reconcile this with his claim that the monarch is the infinite subjectivity of the State?

The monarch cannot exist apart from the State. But similarly, without a monarch, “the people is a formless mass and no longer a state.”³⁹ The reason is that, for Hegel, will is personality and the personality of the State is the monarch.⁴⁰ The monarch is the subjective will in and for the universal. “[S]overeignty is there as the personality of the whole, and this personality is there, in the real existence adequate to its concept, as the person of the monarch.”⁴¹ The

personality of the State is expressed in the monarch's majesty of mind: in his ability to grant pardon.

As we have argued, the sovereign power to grant pardon is a "crime" against the State. So again (in answer to the devil's advocate) monarchic pardon is not itself subject to slipping into evil. It is not the act of a *particular* individual. The *actuality* of monarchic subjectivity is not the abstract self that can be evil or good. Rather, it is the constitutionally embedded sovereign self. It is the act of the person of the monarch as personality of the State. This is different from Henry V acting as the virtuous leader of unruly soldiers and chaotic contingencies.

INHERITANCE OF THE CROWN THROUGH NATURAL BIRTH

The fact that the crown comes through natural birth inheritance is crucial here. Birth is a natural, contingent sphere within which to spawn the ego of a sovereign. There is no incommensurability to overcome because nature makes it arbitrary (within a set of parental genes) "who" gets to be king. Inheritance by birth inverts reasoned-to-power: It robs choice from the subjectivity of the would-be monarch. The State has determined its personality to be nature's product and not to be a will-to-power. This is what makes Hegel's monarch different from Henry V. Hegel's theory takes *de jure* power out of the hands of the monarch and replaces it with a dialectically generated ethical constitution in which the monarch is the State *institution* that expresses the freedom of infinite judgment.

We have seen that for Hegel, the negative moments of crime and evil are part of the development of the State. In the rational culmination of the development of rights, the subject as the principle of negation is dialectically enfolded within the unity of the State. So the State, rather than being ruled over by the subjectivity of the monarch, is *embodied* self-certainty and self-rule. The body is the body politic. The individual monarch is that body's personality. The organism requires both body and person.

Once again, then, the monarch is maintained as much by the participation of the other individuals in their social roles as they are by his participation in his: "In the rational organism of the state, each member, by maintaining itself in its own position, *eo ipso* maintains the others in theirs."⁴² For Hegel, this only happens when "there is an *organic* relation subsisting between members, not parts."⁴³ The State which divides its functions "mechanically" does not thrive. What guarantees the throne is that the moments of the State are "organically interconnected":

Hence public freedom in general and an hereditary monarchy guarantee each other; they stand or fall together of necessity, because public freedom means a rational constitution, while the hereditary

character of the power of the crown is, as has been shown, the moment lying in the concept of that power.⁴⁴

So *if* it is possible to have rational constitutional monarchy, the organism's interconnected institutions make up its rationality. The monarch is the infinite subjectivity, but that subjectivity alone is not rationality. Only as part of the whole is the monarch the rational will of the State. Likewise, the State would not be rational without the monarch. It is his ability to pardon, in particular, that guarantees State rationality.

Pardon is necessary for the organism's rationality. On the one hand, the monarch must be able to pardon, both in order to express *his* infinite subjectivity and therefore in order to properly be the *personality* of the State; on the other hand, he must pardon in order to make the State capable of self-sublation. *Aufhebung* must be self-consciously internal to the constitution. Pardon makes this possible, for pardon is a destabilizing moment of subjectivity within the objective stability of the universal whole. Pardon injects majesty of mind into policy. Among other things, this guarantees that the universalized heart is not reduced to patriotism.

In conclusion, our reply to the devil about Hegel's monarch is the following: It is the organic unity of the State's institutions (including the institution of the crown) that prevents the act of pardoning from generating a particularity that could threaten the whole.⁴⁵

Policy vs. Majesty of Mind: Negation vs. Sublation

We have seen in Chapter 9 that Henry V *negates* negative infinite judgments. He punishes crime by annulling its participants, and he sets up an alternative will (the virtuous sovereign). We suggested that what was needed was not negation but rather *sublation*. In sublation, the world of wit, and indeed the world of the naïve sovereign, would each have been negated and preserved in a higher order. We can now clarify this difference.

Henry V tries to portray himself as essentially a power above the natural, contingent world; he is pure subjectivity that acts on policy. But his State is irrational: It terrorizes in the name of virtue (it goes to war not only against its internal traitors but universally against "court" jesters: the men of Eastcheap and the mocking French). Henry V negates his opposition by annulling them.

By comparison, Hegel's modern monarch is the "I" of the "we." Since he is a member of a rational State, he embodies the rational unity of subjectivity and ethical life. He is subject to living with rectitude, that is, according to his station in society.⁴⁶

Furthermore, rather than rejecting contingencies or ruling over them in the name of virtue, Hegel's sovereign self enfolds contingencies into itself. First, the monarch's natural birth brings the category of existence front and center:

Infinite subjectivity is planted within natural contingency. Second, his right to pardon is part of the rationality of the State, even if he is born a fool.⁴⁷

On a broader level, in Hegel's account, contingencies are not left out of the political picture. They are part of the infinity of the State qua finite entity:

For the absolute government, in order to be the absolute Idea posits absolutely the endless movement of the absolute concept. In the latter there must be differences and, because they are in the concept, universal and infinite, they must therefore be systems. And in this way alone is an absolute government and absolute living identity possible, but born into appearance and reality.⁴⁸

A complete investigation of how Hegel's Concept lets itself go as the contingency of nature requires looking at the comprehensive view of time and the plays of history within time. That comprehensive view is that of "Absolute Knowing."⁴⁹ To begin making this clear, we must articulate the differences in Hegel between the Objective Spirit of the "State" and the Absolute Spirit of "Absolute Knowing."

The Redemption of the State vs. Redemption of Absolute Spirit

Tragedy Prevails at the Level of Objective Spirit

The prince can redeem an individual, but the prince, as a single individual, cannot redeem time. The ethical State is the "I" that is a "we" that contains *within itself* the moment of pardon. At issue, then, is the comprehensive self-consciousness of the State as a sovereign self. The *individual prince's* comprehension of time is relevant only as a moment within the institution of monarchy that is itself embedded in the organism of the State. Through the capricious act of the crown in pardoning, the *State* redeems *itself*. The State is, therefore, the Sovereign wit of Objective Spirit. That said, the State can only redeem its own time. It does not redeem the history of international politics. And even if a State organically grows to this its most comprehensive sovereignty, international politics destabilize it from without. Sovereign State wit falls prey to war. In Hegel's account, ethical life, even at the moment of its greatest achievement, cannot escape tragedy once and for all.

The Introduction of a Higher Sphere: Universal Wit

According to Hegel, monarchic pardon reflects a higher sphere into a lower one since it reflects Absolute Spirit into politics. This does not change the tragic nature of State history. But we must inquire whether it introduces a cognitive standpoint before which human life is no longer merely tragic. Is there a transition to be

made from the Sovereign Wit of Objective Spirit to a Universal Wit of Absolute Spirit? In Hegel's philosophy, Absolute Spirit has three moments: art, religion and philosophy. Is there a spirit of art, of religion, and of philosophy that makes the political world just one world in a hierarchy of self-comprehending worlds? To begin, let us turn to the last of Shakespeare's history plays.

Part III. Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*:

From Historical Politics to Religion, Art, and Philosophy

The title of Shakespeare's play *Henry VIII* is actually *All is True*. It has been known as *Henry VIII* "at least since 1623."⁵⁰ The play was collaboratively written by Shakespeare and John Fletcher. *Henry VIII* is the last of the History plays in terms of history of monarchs dealt with by Shakespeare. It was also the last History play that Shakespeare wrote. It was written in 1613.

With regard to the role of pardon in Objective Spirit, what is important for us in this play is the role of forgiveness in the play's final scenes. I briefly summarize the instances of forgiveness within the general context of the plot. Then, I discuss two possible reasons for Shakespeare's use of forgiveness in the play. The first is that some sort of political reason is behind the turn toward forgiveness. The play depicts political events much closer to Shakespeare's time than his earlier History plays. At the end of the play, baby Elizabeth, who becomes the Queen of England in Shakespeare's time, is born; also, in the play, evocations are made to James I (Queen Elizabeth's successor), as well as to other royal figures alive during Shakespeare's life.⁵¹ Thus the play is more politically sensitive than the earlier ones and a happy conclusion to it would have been advisable.

The second possible explanation for the role of forgiveness is the confluence of genres in the play (i.e., of history with romance). In this discussion, I introduce Hegel's view about forgiveness in the *Phenomenology*.

My conclusion is that, while there may be many reasons for the forgiving at the end of the play, the one that interests us most is the change in genres. It points to a different perspective than the historical and political drama, one that is universal and teleological. This genre makes use of religious concepts such as the Fall and forgiveness of sins. It is focused self-consciously on the art of the drama. Through these it points (I argue) to a new kind of moral imaginary not present in the tragedy, comedy, or history plays. The more universalistic and teleological approach makes *Henry VIII* a good play to look at as segue to our discussion of absolute standpoints in Shakespeare's Romances and in Hegel's phenomenology, in Part III of the book.

Forgiveness in Henry VIII

Henry VIII involves a series of horrible successes by the scheming power-and-wealth-monger Cardinal Wolsey against innocent and upright noblemen and

Queens (especially Queen Katherine). He continuously twists the truth and makes Henry VIII his tool. In the end, Wolsey is shown up for what he is, loses his standing and possessions, and retreats into infamy.

What is strange about the play is that at the end, the people who suffered under him—those still alive—are urged to (and do) forgive him:

Lord Chamberlain: "O, my lord,
Press not a falling man too far. 'Tis virtue.
His faults lie open to the laws. Let them,
Not you, correct him. My heart weeps to see him
So little of his great self."
Surrey: "I forgive him."⁵²

Queen Katherine, whose loss of stature and wealth was largely due to Wolsey's influence over the King, likewise forgives him:

Whom I most hated living, thou hast made me,
With thy religious truth and modesty,
Now in his ashes honour: peace be with him!⁵³

Cardinal Wolsey himself turns away from his selfish, hypocritical ways. He begins to lead a monkish simple life of poverty and religious observance. When asked how he is, he replies "Never so truly happy, my good Cromwell. / I know myself now, and I feel within me / A peace above all earthly dignities, / A still and quiet conscience."⁵⁴

Similarly, in the court, another poor soul is about to be sent to the Tower. But news arrives of the birth of Princess Elizabeth, and all are invited to embrace each other in a spirit of forgiveness.

King Henry VIII: "Make me no more ado, but all embrace him:
Be friends, for shame, my lords! My Lord of Canterbury,
I have a suit which you must not deny me;
That is, a fair young maid that yet wants baptism,
You must be godfather, and answer for her."⁵⁵

This is followed by the long baptismal scene for the newly born Elizabeth.⁵⁶

The play thus moves from a Wolseyan, Machiavellian real-politic to a rather unbelievable celebratory spirit of forgiveness and confidence.

Hegel on Henry VIII

To begin scrutinizing forgiveness in this play, let us look briefly at what Hegel writes about *Henry VIII*.

Hegel mentions the play in two places in the *Aesthetics*. Both passages lie in an argument familiar to us from our Introduction. Hegel is discussing the nobility of using simile: Specifically, he celebrates the way in which noble characters in deep distress are able to “suppress their lamentation and preserve freedom to occupy themselves with some far-off idea and in this remote object to express their own fate to themselves in an image.”⁵⁷ Hegel cites several Shakespearean characters:

In *Henry VIII*, for example, Queen Katharine, forsaken by her spouse, cries out in the deepest sadness [Act III, Scene i]:

“I am the most unhappy woman living . . .
Shipwreck’d upon a kingdom where no pity,
No friends, no hope; no kindred weep for me;
Almost no grave allow’d me; like the lily,
That once was mistress of the field and flourish’d,
I’ll hang my head and perish.”⁵⁸

On the next page, Hegel shows that it is not just the innocent who thus ennoble themselves. He cites Macbeth.⁵⁹ Then Hegel cites Queen Katharine’s arch enemy:

So too it is in *Henry VIII* with Cardinal Wolsey who, struck down from his greatness, exclaims at the end of his career;

“Farewell! A long farewell to all my greatness!
This is the state of man: to-day he puts forth
The tender leaves of hopes; to-morrow blossoms,
And bears his blushing honours thick upon him;
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost,
And, when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
His greatness is a-ripening, nips his root,
And then he falls, as I do.”⁶⁰

In short, Hegel’s use of *Henry VIII* is in the service of making only this one point: There is an ennobling process involved in the use of simile which points to a degree of nobility in the simile-user.

Through, Behind, and Beyond the Veils

We can use Hegel’s examples of simile in *Henry VIII* to start investigating forgiveness. Like simile-use, forgiveness requires self-reflection and a change in perspective. To develop this, let us widen the scope of comparison. Let us compare self-reflection in superstition, simile-use, hypocrisy, and forgiveness.

The clouds of magic and prophecy conjured up by the witches in *Macbeth* are so full of images that we can barely decipher them. I have characterized this level of self-consciousness as a *sub*-conscious, dream-like nature. As I discussed earlier, Macbeth does not have the degree of self-awareness needed for conscience. Yet Hegel cites Macbeth's use of simile. Therefore, simile-use does not imply the level of self-consciousness needed for having a conscience (though of course one can have a conscience and use simile too). Further, since for Hegel conscience (or the conscious rejection of conscience) is the precondition of hypocrisy, the mere use of simile is not on its own a self-reflection that produces hypocrisy. In Hegel's account, simile-use in drama often arises from a self-reflection that seeks, through comparison, to soften the effects of trauma; hypocrisy arises from a more profound and broader awareness, one which knows the common good but seeks the self's particular ends at the expense of the common good.⁶¹

Magical imagery, simile, and hypocrisy each set up veils. These veils have different functions: Witches and self-ennoblers speak through the veils of simile. Hypocrites hide behind them.

Forgiveness in its turn, requires more than what is needed for simile or for hypocrisy. It requires majesty of mind. Forgiveness, like monarchic pardon, is the sublation of negative infinite judgments (the sublation of crimes against oneself or the community) in order to benefit the community. It does not merely nullify: it negates in order to preserve, and it does so with rational insight into the social body.

The problem with the cases of forgiveness in *Henry VIII* is that they are not made by such organically rational spirits. Instances of forgiveness sail in from nowhere. Similarly, the baptism speech of Elizabeth is not credible. After a long play in which *All is True* has been shown to be *All is Not True*, we are invited to wash our eyes of history and share in a "true" vision of a perfect future peace under Elizabeth. This simply does not wash (as it were). Both the forgiving and the prophecy of perpetual peace fall short of properly thought-through forgiveness and insight.

Political vs. Religious Reasons for Introducing Forgiveness and the Baptism Speech

The forgiving tone and the long baptismal speech might have been Shakespeare's nod toward his Queen's divine right to rule despite the political conflicts that previously plagued her royal lineage's history.⁶² Perhaps too, it was a nod toward religion.

But neither political nor religious explanations are enough to shake us out of incredulity. First, the audience of Shakespeare's time knew full well that the perpetual peace evoked by Cranmer's baptismal speech did not materialize. The Elizabethans achieved no more "quiet repose" than Hegel's civilian ever *really* could.⁶³

Second, the play's resolution is hardly satisfactory from the point of view of religion: Northrop Frye describes the hidden hand of the play as "an invisible but omnipotent and ruthless providence who is ready to tear the whole social and religious structure of England to pieces in order to get Queen Elizabeth born."⁶⁴ *Henry VIII* is in this respect an ironic tragedy.

But there is more going on here than a shabby attempt at political or religious expedience.

A Change of Perspective: The Art of Absolute Spirit; All is True as Tragi-Comedy

In *Henry VIII*, the tragedies end in an improbable comedy. Walter Cohen writes that "In *All is True*, the national history play meets the tragicomic romance."⁶⁵ Unlike the other history plays, *Henry VIII* does not simply draw on Holinshed's *Chronicles* and other works of history. The year it was written (1613) was a time in which the tragicomic romance, "influenced by late Renaissance elite Italian theater, was very much in vogue . . . thanks largely to the recent works of Shakespeare, Francis Beaumont, and Fletcher."⁶⁶ Cohen explains the difference between history and tragicomic romance in *Henry VIII*:

The historical narrative, which combines close reliance on the sources with the chronological compression and rearrangement, spans almost twenty-five years. Its principal structural unit is *de casibus* tragedy, which recounts the fall of illustrious figures and resembles the morality play's abstractly allegorical focus on virtue and vice. The wheel of fortune is the form's dominant, cyclical image: what goes up must come down. Providential romance, however, is teleological: it has an end in view. So much of *All is True* concerns not the ups and downs of monarchs and their rivals, as in Shakespeare's earlier histories, but the successive falls of Buckingham, Katherine, and Cardinal Wolsey, and the near fall of Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury. . . . Initially, the repetitive *de casibus* structure doesn't seem to be heading anywhere. Yet the linguistic patterning suggests a larger purpose . . . the play emphasizes suffering, the burden of life, acquiescence in defeat, forgiveness of one's foes, patience, religious serenity, and an understanding of the fall from power as part of a natural pattern like life itself.⁶⁷

Forgiveness is just one of the themes used in Romance plays that are also used in *Henry VIII*. Another similarity with the Romances is references (for example, in Wolsey's speech above) to natural processes (e.g., blossoms and nipping frost) as allegories for the condition of man or of his fall from grace.

Cohen provides other examples. For instance, in the language of *Henry VIII*, Shakespeare uses nautical imagery. Images of sea journeys were common to romance:

Henry finds himself “hulling in / The wild sea of my conscience” over his marriage to Katherine,⁶⁸ who worries about her “shipwrecked” ladies-in-waiting. Wolsey’s foes are “rav’nous fishes” who ineffectually attach his “new trimmed . . . vessel.”⁶⁹

Sea journeys “typically bring separation, suffering, and a transformation whose association with water links it to baptism.”⁷⁰ Elizabeth’s baptism can be read in this light: It is simply part of the way that a romance drama—with its concern for Providential teleology—comes to a close.

Another similarity between *Henry VIII* and Shakespeare’s Romance plays is that evil people and heroes are caricatures rather than developed figures (as they are in the great tragedies and the other history plays). Finally, the play as a whole requires its audience to be more forgiving of the leaps and lurches in its plot as it veers toward resolution. In this respect, to use our Hegelian language, *Henry VIII* (like Shakespeare’s Romance plays) is more about sublating infinite negative judgments than about the toils and complexities involved in making negative infinite judgments. The play introduces a different way of parsing time and judging events. The historical has been left in favor of a different perspective on time.

The ability of this change of genres to introduce a standpoint that escapes the tragic nature of history must be investigated. The judgment it invites does not occur according to terms set by history. Rather, the judgment, the *dirempion* (the *urteil*) is instead one *about* history, that changes history. Yet such judgment cannot cease to be a part of history. For to rise above time would be a return to the subjective one-sidedness of *Henry V*; it would reopen the door to self-deceiving hypocrisy. The judgment that redeems time must somehow be in time, albeit not absolutely constrained by its “plays.”

I believe that for Hegel and Shakespeare, forgiveness is essential to a State’s highest achievement. I also believe that neither Hegel nor Shakespeare viewed political history as the final, highest, or comprehensive arena of human invention. I think that for them, the appearance of forgiveness in the play of history points to a higher level. Neither the fact of monarchic pardon nor the change of perspective in *Henry VIII* solved the problem of history being tragic. But it did introduce the notion that forgiveness is what is needed to raise social judgment to a level at which tragedy does not rule.

If these beliefs of mine are correct, then the task before Hegel and Shakespeare was to work out the personality of forgiveness comprehensively. The expression I have chosen to accommodate both Hegel’s and Shakespeare’s ideal in this respect is *universal wit*. This wit is not expressed in the language of politics or the dramas

of history. So far, in Shakespeare, we have lurched toward the new standpoint by moving from historical plays to one that incorporates romance. In Hegel, dialectical phenomenology culminates in an Absolute Self-knowing Concept. In Part III of this book, I take up these issues. Here, we point toward it.

The Sublating Spirit: Forgiveness Is the Wonder of Absolute Spirit

Forgiveness in the Phenomenology of Spirit

According to Hegel, absolute resolution lies not at the level of Objective Spirit (the State), but at the level of Absolute Spirit. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, forgiveness is the final moment of Spirit that opens onto Absolute Spirit (first in the form of religion, then to its final form as philosophical comprehension in “Absolute Knowing”).

The breaking of the hard heart, and the raising of it to universality, is the same movement which was expressed in the consciousness that made confession of itself. The wounds of the Spirit heal, and leave no scars behind. The deed is not imperishable; it is taken back by Spirit into itself, and the aspect of individuality present in it, whether as intention or as an existent negativity and limitation, straightaway vanishes. . . .

The word of reconciliation is the *objectively* existent Spirit, which beholds the pure knowledge of itself *qua universal* essence, in its opposite, in the pure knowledge of itself *qua* absolutely self-contained and exclusive *individuality*—a reciprocal recognition which is *absolute* Spirit.⁷¹

The truth of social redemption in the *Phenomenology* is the universal application by each and every person of what, in the *Philosophy of Right*, is called the majesty of mind—monarchic pardon. The monarch’s ability to invert the infinite negative judgment that crime is, is in the *Phenomenology*, each individual’s ability to forgive. The central personality in the State constitution of the *Philosophy of Right* is the monarch. The central personality in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is the individual absolute knower.

The absolute knower is the fully self-conscious “I” that is a “we.” For Hegel, forgiveness is essential to absolute, *universal* (as opposed to merely State) justice. Therefore, if, for Hegel, there is universal wit, it belongs to an absolute spirit whose foundation is the sublating power of forgiveness.⁷²

Sublating the Sovereign Self

Since the beginning chapters of Part II, we have followed the claims and developments of the “sovereign self.” “Sovereign” has referred straightforwardly

to princes, and phenomenologically, to self-certainty and will. We traced the development of the sovereign self through alienation, from naïve will to savvy wit, in the consciousnesses of Richard II and Falstaff. With Henry V, we witnessed the claim that sovereign alienation had been annulled: Time had been redeemed. We concluded that Henry V's pretense of negating (rather than sublating) negative infinite judgments made him a self-fooling hypocrite. Time was not redeemed.

Our comparison of Henry V to Hegel's constitutional monarch revealed the following. A separated sovereign will-to-power is not as good as a crown that is one institution among others in an organically developed state. Pure subjectivity, the principle of negation,⁷³ is, as separated will, subject to evil; the same principle of negation as part of the constitution of the body politic is the personality of the State and its means of self-sublation. Policy-based punishment must be tempered with the majesty of mind through monarchic pardon. In that way, negation of negative infinite judgment is replaced by the *sublation* of negative infinite judgments.

This discussion gave rise to the idea that a higher kind of judgment than those of policy alone must be involved if we are to have the kind of judgment needed for universal wit and universal justice. The problem thereafter has been how to move from the tragic plays of history to this new kind of judgment. In order to start answering this, we turned to *Henry VIII* and the role of forgiveness in it. That play does not show history rising above tragedy, but it does introduce questions concerning the relation of art, religion, and philosophy to history.

Since any justice based solely on policy can only reiterate alienation, absolute justice is impossible on the basis of policy alone. Forgiveness is the act of Spirit knowing itself to be internally dirempted. It is the dialectical overcoming of the sovereign self—the overcoming of the self that takes its diremption (or its claims of particularity) as the final goal. Forgiveness is therefore that without which absolute justice (i.e., justice for all and for the common good) is unthinkable.

Forgiveness, not sovereign posturing, sublates the necessary incommensurabilities within self-certainty, will, and right. In the State, monarchic pardon is the State's way of overcoming that necessary alienation in the "I" that is a "we." Phenomenologically, forgiveness is the sublation of Objective Spirit into Absolute Spirit, of spirit into Absolute Knowing.

In this change of perspective and medium, the sovereign self seems to have itself been sublated. Forgiveness, the sublation of negative infinite judgments, performed by each equally, is the final moment in the *Aufhebung* of the sovereign selves we have been following. Forgiveness preserves the freedom of infinite subjectivity while recognizing policy as means to the good.

We must now deal with a question that has arisen in this examination.

There is no obvious *institution* for forgiveness in Absolute Knowing. Indeed, forgiveness appears to threaten the very fabric of sovereignty. In Objective Spirit, the monarch is an institutional personality. What kind of institution or body does universal wit have? What is the body of Absolute Knowing? If it is not a State body-politic that redeems time for itself, what body does? What is the rational organism of Absolute Knowing?

Furthermore, what language does Absolute Knowing speak? To answer these questions according to Hegel, one must to turn to religion, art, and philosophy—to the moments that make up Absolute Spirit. My answer, in Part III, is to look at Absolute Knowing in relation to Shakespearean Romance drama.

In Shakespeare's Romances as well as in Hegel's conclusion to the *Phenomenology* ("Absolute Knowing"), the tragedy-prone historical lineages of princes (i.e., the tragic-prone dialectical developments of sovereign self-certainty) are overcome by an absolving power of forgiveness (e.g., Jupiter in *Cymbeline*, Apollo in *The Winter's Tale*, Athena in *Pericles*, Prospero in *The Tempest*). In Shakespeare, these plot-disrupting insertions of figures who forgive indicate that in the switch of genres from History to Romance, a change in perspective has occurred. In Romance, as in Hegel's Absolute Knowing, we are no longer concerned with history alone or with the tragedies or comedies of character and plot. Rather, we are concerned with the fabric of moral imagination.

Forgiveness Is the Wonder of Absolute Spirit

Forgiveness is not a completed form of justice. Just as wonder (the individual's urge to overcome contradiction) was only the beginning of self-knowledge, so too forgiveness (which is the *social* urge to overcome alienation) is the *beginning* of social rationality.

Forgiveness is only the beginning because a true redemption of time—absolute justice—requires the comprehensive insight of absolute knowing. And that insight cannot be separated from its actualization in time.

As for the body of Universal Wit, my preliminary answer is the following. Universal Wit involves a turn toward shorthand versions of what in the earlier Tragedies and Histories were much more developed: Characters are caricatures; images are "recollected" rather than developed; there is also a greater presence of metaphors ("seas between cockle shells," "gallery of images" and "the cup that froths forth"). These techniques are the sign that for Hegel and Shakespeare, in the new judgment, political tragedies have shrunk and a new Spirit has arisen.

In what follows, I argue along Hegelian lines that, although this new perspective is not a State body-politic, it is a "concrete" and "embodied" Universal Wit.

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Part III

Universal Wit

The Romance Plays and Absolute Knowing

Yet thou dost look
Like patience gazing on Kings' graves, and smiling
Extremity out of act.

—Pericles to Marina, *Pericles*¹

Introduction to Part III

We have arrived at the idea of an absolute standpoint. The theater of Universal Wit has swallowed all forms of sovereignty. The phenomenological play is the thing wherein we have caught the consciences of the kings. But what is this Globe, this comprehensive arena of action and thought?

To begin, (Chapter 11), we look at the language, tropes, and themes of Absolute Knowing and of the Romance plays. This reveals that the body of Universal Wit is the theater of identity; its life is the process by which identities arise. That process is self-conscious judgment.²

Then we look at the production of identity in two ways. First, we investigate the kind of judgment that makes Universal Wit prosper; second (Chapter 12), we look at the kind of judgment that makes it sicken and die.

What makes it prosper is in large part the forgiveness which results from insight into identity formation (that is, insight into *logos*). This dialectical comprehension of self gives up the attempt at being sovereign in the historical sense because it grasps the concept of a self-consciously rational

society. Our dramatic persona for this investigation is the man whose name plays on the notion of prospering: namely, Prospero.

What makes Universal Wit sick is the failure to realize the role of forgiveness in social reasoning, a failure due to having a non-dialectical understanding of identity; it is a failure of judgment that turns one into (what I call) a Universal Sovereign Will. Our dramatic personae for this are King Leontes in *The Winter's Tale* and Pure Insight in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*.

Chapter 11

Universal Wit— The Absolute Theater of Identity

Part I. Being at Sea

Let us pretend for a moment that we are sticking to the historical, political attitude of Objective Spirit and of Shakespeare's History plays, and that we are encountering Shakespeare's Romance genre with that attitude in mind. Let us look at Shakespeare's Romance play *Pericles*. From our assumed standpoint, *Pericles* appears to have few phenomenological merits.³ The character of King Pericles is not credible, nor is the plot.⁴ If we compare imprisoned Richard II⁵ with the unshaven, out-of-luck king of Tyre Pericles,⁶ the latter figure does not draw us in. Pericles' fate always seems to come to him entirely from without. Unlike for Richard II, events for Pericles never lead to development in his self-consciousness. For example, if we compare the role of music in Richard II's prison speech with the role of the divine music heard by Pericles after he has realized that Marina is his daughter, we note the following. The interiority of time, meter and meaning and the relation of those to the social order are profound in Richard II's account; the music changes him. In *Pericles*, the music is ridiculous; it wafts in. Pericles merely hears it.⁷

Furthermore (from our assumed historical standpoint of Objective Spirit), it is implausible that Pericles would find his armor cast up on shore just when he needs it; and Marina's pious staving off of lecherous male pirates and brothel owners requires us to stretch our imaginations to the extreme.

This sort of ridiculousness, it would be argued, is par for the course in Shakespeare's Romances. The plays are teleological in the sense that in them all tragedies are resolved. But in each play, the course and means of resolution are strange and unpredictable. Redemption usually comes in the form of intervention by Greek or Roman gods.⁸

These plays therefore leave an objective, historical observer at a loss. Given this, and given the predominance of images of the sea, we might conclude that Shakespeare's Romance genre is a kind of "Being at Sea." I mean this both in the sense of the experience and in the sense that, any standpoint that the plays might portray, seems to be a "Being" that has lost its footing.

Commentators over the ages have questioned Shakespeare's artistic ability when writing these late plays.⁹ At this point, let me step out of our assumed, objective, historical standpoint, and take the different approach to Shakespeare's Romances that we introduced at the end of last chapter. First, I agree with Northrop Frye's defense of the Romances:

In our day most critics are reconciled to the superiority of Shakespeare, but the Jonsonian point of view still survives in those critics who find the height of Shakespeare's achievement in the great tragedies, and feel that the romances of the final period represent an exhaustion of vitality or a subsiding into more facile and commercial formulas. My own view is that the turn to romance in Shakespeare's last phase represents a genuine culmination. I naturally do not mean that the romances are better or greater plays than the tragedies; I mean that there is a logical evolution toward romance in Shakespeare's work, and consequently no anticlimax, whether technical or spiritual, in passing from *King Lear* through *Pericles* to *The Tempest*.¹⁰

I express this culmination in Shakespeare's dramatic efforts as follows: In the Romances, unlike in his previous works, Shakespeare uses a language of Universal Wit. In what follows, I show that this new imaginative framework is proto-phenomenological and analogous to the culminating moments of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

This is not to say that the culmination of Hegel's phenomenology is not thoroughly committed to the necessity of the moments leading up to it (in a way that is not so or indeed possible for Shakespeare).¹¹ Nor do I mean to make shallow in any way the depth and breadth of Hegel's Concept as it grasps itself as/at the end of time.¹² I am pronouncing on the need—found in Hegel's account of Absolute Knowing as well as in the Romances—for a different kind of language once one approaches the world from a point of view of Universal Wit. In other words, while remaining clear about differences between Hegel and Shakespeare, I nonetheless assert that Universal Wit is the general theme and standpoint of both the Romances and of Absolute Knowing.

Nor am I arguing that the Universal Wit expressed in Hegel or Shakespeare is adequate to gender or race politics as we understand them today (for example, of the kind expressed in Butler's performativity¹³). I am arguing that

Hegel and Shakespeare challenged reigning ideologies of their time by taking the standpoint of a Universal Wit.

The language of Universal Wit is phenomenological and dialectical.¹⁴ As I argue below, even though Shakespeare's Romances do not achieve the complete picture that Hegel thought such thinking eventually must achieve, the Romances nonetheless exhibit traits of phenomenological and dialectical thought. My conclusion here is not that Shakespeare falls short of Hegel's goal. The comparison places onus just as much on Hegel's theory: in the face of Shakespeare's manner of expressing Universal Wit, Hegel's kind of completion is challenged.

Despite these differences and tensions, my argument below seeks to show that the culmination of speculative science (Hegel's Absolute Knowing) and the culmination of Shakespeare's dramatic insight (his Romances) share a common vantage point. They each attempt to express a Universal Wit. To clarify this, let us define Universal Wit in and through Shakespeare and Hegel.

Part II. Universal Wit

Universal Wit Has Itself for Its Object

The comparison above of Richard II with Pericles misses the mark. The Romances are not concerned with developing the details of a particular character in the throes of a particular situation (for example, Richard II in his alienation from the court and crown). Shakespeare is no longer concerned with firmness of character or the depth of passion or the singleness of pathos (for all of which Hegel praises Shakespeare).

On the contrary, the Romance plots and characters are consciously contrived, implausible, and fantastical because they present a different kind of theater, with different time and space coordinates. Indeed, the fact that, in the Romance plays, the three unities are blown to the wind reveals these plays to be works of imagination.¹⁵ By this I mean something more robust than simply fantasy.

The Romances are (historically, proto-) phenomenological. The theater of imagination—its ability to create, destroy, and resolve—is what is under investigation. The underlying assumption (as I have argued elsewhere is the case in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*) is that in order to think properly about history, we have to think our representations through to their end; that alone shows us how to properly think *through* them as they arise. By the time of his Romance plays, Shakespeare has thought his representations through and now he is thinking through them. It is as if, instead of characters, it is now the plays themselves that are invested with "spirit and imagination"; as if the plays now

make “the picture in which they can contemplate and see themselves objectively like a work of art”; as if Shakespeare has thereby made dramatic productions “free artists of their own selves. . . .”¹⁶

It is possible that Shakespeare was driven to this viewpoint because he realized that, in it, there was a possibility of representing a higher form of justice than the justice presented by history, tragedy or comedy.

Universal Wit Is (Proto-) Phenomenological and Knows Representation Absolutely

Shakespeare is a proto-phenomenologist concerned with thinking through shapes of imagination. Shakespeare’s Romances and Hegel’s phenomenological project are similar in this respect. The evidence lies in (a) their use of language in a way that opens up the relation of signifier to signified, and (b) their use of a language that nonetheless attempts to be absolute.

In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the language of phenomenology is unspecific—one might even say imaginative. The reason for this is, for example, that the ultimate resolution of what Hegel calls “the Unhappy Consciousness” has to be the grasping of the absoluteness of “I am here now” in a language that works for all. Despite the fact that for Hegel, revealed religion is Christianity, his phenomenological viewpoint is that a language limited to a particular religion or point in history cannot work for all people: Each language is too particularized and therefore, from some point of view other than its own, evil (or potentially so). To manage particularity, in the section on the Unhappy Consciousness, Hegel refers to the “Unchangeable” rather than “God”; Hegel pulls conceptual strings, even if (perhaps so that) the puppet on the end of them appears out of time and place.

Shakespeare’s use of Jupiter in *Cymbeline* is a case of this. The freedom of language in the Romance plays is out of historical sense of time and place; it expresses a *phenomenological* time and place. The wit disrupts any “honest” appeal to “tradition.”

Some of what Hegel writes of Absolute Knowing can be directly applied to this new, imaginative framework of Shakespearean Romances. As we mentioned, phenomenological richness is not to be found in the depth of characters or the necessity of plots. Like Absolute Knowing, a Shakespearean Romance play is a “recollected” history, a “gallery of images,” a “transformed existence . . . reborn of Spirit’s Knowledge”; it occurs in a different imaginative space, in “a new world and a new shape of Spirit”; it is “Spirit in the form of *free contingent happening*.”¹⁷

Let us look more closely at the “recollected” nature of the characters. In the Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel makes an analogy between the absolute knower’s speculative comprehension of the past and “schoolchildren” that have learned their lessons. Once the latter grow up they no longer need to

do the labor of learning their lessons, they can simply recollect them, often in shorthand form.¹⁸ Hegel clarifies the grandeur of this in Absolute Knowing:

The realm of Spirits which is formed in this way in the outer world constitutes a succession in Time in which one Spirit relieved another of its charge and each took over the empire of the world from its predecessor. Their goal is the revelation of the depth of Spirit, and this is the *absolute Notion*. This revelation is, therefore, the raising-up of its depth, or its extension, the negativity of this withdrawn “I,” a negativity which is its externalization or its substance; and this revelation is also the Notion’s Time, in that this externalization is in its own self externalized, and just as it is in its extension, so it is equally in its depth, in the Self.¹⁹

In both the Romances and in Absolute Knowing, it is no longer the *character’s* depth that is plumbed, it is the Self of representation whose depth is revealed. Romance too is a “foaming forth” of “recollected spirits” from the depth of the sovereign self’s tragedies and comedies. Shorthand sketches of characters allow Shakespeare to facilitate the transition from tragedy to resolution. Romance theater is universal wit, the theater of identity underlying the expression “all the world is a stage.” In Hegelian language, it is self-conscious spirit.

Universal Wit Is Dialectical Sublation

Romance it is not a return to medieval caricature. A Shakespearean Romance presupposes the forms of consciousness that make up its fabric. A Romance play is the wit of Falstaff (or of Rameau’s Nephew) *sublated* into Universal Wit: Universal Wit is the theater that sends up its own plots and characters. This is not simply irony. Falstaff’s wit survives, but it is transformed. It is not the catharsis of tragedy or the levity of comedy: Universal Wit *comprehends* the tragic and comic shapes of objective spirit; it commits a crime against these (in a more developed but similar way to how wit performed a crime against honest consciousness). Thus, just as Falstaff’s wit was a crime against language, robbing it of its original meanings and inserting difference into identity, so too, the serious, tragic characters that belong to ethical life are what Universal Wit throws back at the seriousness of ethical life. This is not the levity of comedy; it is the *sublation* of tragedy.

How does it do this?

Universal Wit Redeems Through Forgiveness

As with Absolute Knowing, the structure of Romance is the structure of forgiveness: It sublates the negative infinite judgments of history by performing a

crime against them. But unlike *Henry VIII*, in which instances of forgiveness mark the transition from history to a higher order, the Romances, like Absolute Knowing, unveil (in veils) the *shape* of redeeming judgment. They do so by providing the absolute theater of identity.

The Theater of Identity: Time and Nature According to Universal Wit

In both Hegel's Absolute Knowing and Shakespeare's Romances, the *body* of Universal Wit is a new Time and a new Nature that arises out of the grave of the past. With regard to Time, Hegel writes:

Spirit necessarily appears in Time, and it appears in Time just so long as it has not *grasped* its pure Notion, i.e. has not annulled Time. It is the *outer*, intuited pure Self which is *not grasped* by the Self, the merely intuited Notion; when this latter grasps itself it sets aside its Time-form, comprehends this intuiting, and it is a comprehended and comprehending intuiting.²⁰

Shakespeare's Romances do not need to heed the unity of time. Indeed, in the Romances, Shakespeare self-consciously annuls time: "Thus time we waste, and long leagues make we short, / Sail seas in cockles, have and wish but for't / Making to take imagination / From bourn to bourn, region to region."²¹ By contrast, the unenlightened King Pericles says in the play that "time's the King of men; He's both their parent and he is their grave, / And gives them what he will, not what they crave."²² Pericles' concept of "sovereign" time is what Hegel calls "the *outer*, intuited pure Self which is *not grasped* by the Self." It is the way time appears prior to our becoming self-conscious of how we represent time to ourselves on the theater of identity. Shakespeare's Romances, like Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, try to take us out of that historical time of birth and death, into the absolute standpoint. Pericles finds out at the end that his being at sea is such a tale.

With regard to Nature, Hegel writes that it has become the eternal externalization of Absolute Spirit's continuing existence.²³ It expresses itself "in the form of *free contingent happening*;"²⁴ it is a movement of substance which "reinstates the *Subject*."²⁵

For both Hegel and Shakespeare, the culminating standpoint is one in which subject and substance (theater and identity) are grasped as a process of becoming in and through one another. Art and nature are the fabrication of things.

A good metaphor for this sublating nature is Marina's needle in *Pericles*. Gower says of Marina: "when she would with sharp nee'le wound / The cambric which she made more sound / By hurting it."²⁶ The needle rises and descends in

and through the matter at hand, causing the fabric to become. The needle work is a negating (wounding) and determining (curing) dialectic of becoming.

Her needlework is art, but we are told that Marina's art is the twin sister of nature: "with her nee'le [she] composes / Nature's own shape, of bud, bird, branch, or berry, / That e'en her art sisters the natural roses. / Her inkle, silk, twin with the rubied cherry."²⁷

Synthesis in nature's fabrications and synthesis in artistic fabrication stem from the same creative activity. As we will see, this shared creative DNA of nature and art is evident in Prospero's magic (and in his relinquishing of it) in *The Tempest*, as well as in the language about cloth, sewing, and grafting in *The Winter's Tale*.

Universal Wit Returns from the Grave

Both Hegel and Shakespeare use images of graves and emerging from graves, evoking the apocalyptic character of their absolute standpoints. Pericles' wife Thaisa apparently dies at sea in childbirth. He buries her at sea, but her coffin washes ashore and a good doctor revives her. She retires as a nun at the temple of Diana. In the final moments of the play, when Pericles is telling the tale of his life in that temple, Thaisa comes forth and says, "Did you not name a tempest, / A birth and death?" After the recognition has been established, Pericles replies "O come, be buried / A second time within these arms."²⁸ All are grateful "for this great miracle."²⁹

In *The Winter's Tale*, Hermione dies of grief in the face of her husband's accusations and her son's death. At the end of the play, her sculptured likeness comes to life in front of the entire cast of characters. In *Cymbeline*, what appeared to the brothers to be a boy who has died of illness turns out, at the end of the play, to be their very-much-alive sister. And of course in the *Tempest*, all the members of the wrecked ship believe that those whom they cannot see have perished. In the end, they are all restored to each other outside Prospero's cave.

It is a stretch to propose that Hegel's reference to the "Calvary of absolute Spirit" in the last lines of his "Absolute Knowing" is like these Romantic returns from the dead.³⁰ However, for both Hegel and Shakespeare, the final moment of resolution is a moment in which negation is itself negated. And the negation of negation (in the sense of sublation rather than simple nullification), for both Hegel and the Romances, consists in a retelling of the story in a way that now makes everything clear.³¹ I argue (in another work) that the labor involved in making dialectical mediation of identity *clear* is part of the task that Hegel sets for us in the *language* of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The "resurrection" of the absolute concept throughout the *Phenomenology of Spirit* occurs through our labor with his language as well as on the conceptual level.

For example, the absence of the verb “to bury” in Hegel’s account of Antigone (precisely where burial is at issue) invites interrogation and interpretation. It is in disrupted linguistic burials like these that the life of Hegel’s words is to be found. Without this work, we are like Hegel’s critics, whom Hegel calls “the dead burying the dead.”³²

In the end, in both Hegel and Shakespeare, the plot is cured of that which threatens spirit with death. I address this next chapter. For now, I mention only that it is the self’s propensity toward sovereignty that is the illness. Absolute Knowing, cured of this illness, gazes into a cup which froths forth. It is no longer threatened by extreme. At the end of *Pericles*, Pericles says of Marina: “yet thou dost look / Like patience gazing on Kings’ graves, and smiling / Extremity out of act.”³³ In both Absolute Knowing and the Romances, our propensity to make the self’s act sovereign at the expense of the common good is the extreme that is smiled away.

Universal Wit Redeems Crimes by Perpetrating Another Crime: Differences in Identity

The storm at sea is the Romance way of portraying the troubled waters of fate, sin, and bad fortune. Salvation through Universal Wit is the realization of the multiplicity within identity, a realization which does not shy from the perverse but instead “tarries with the negative.”³⁴ The figure of Marina in *Pericles* is an example of a product of Universal Wit. She is so despite being annoyingly prudish (indeed, enough to “freeze the god Priapus and undo the whole of generation”).³⁵

I refer to Marina as a figure rather than as a character. It is what she accomplishes as a figure, not as character, that matters: She is born in a storm at sea; in her life, she is the site of multiplicity and a figure of incarnation; her virtue is expressed in the settings and language of forked-tongues. Thus her fecundity is celebrated by pimps—her virtues are by them “cried through the market”;³⁶ her pimps declare her to be the “sign” under which travelers from any nation can lodge;³⁷ she is to “taste gentlemen of all fashions”³⁸ and she is told “You shall have the difference of all complexions.”³⁹

Like Rosalind in *As You Like It* (as in comedy in general), Marina is a site of multiple identities. Unlike Rosalind, however, Marina’s procreative, restorative potential is housed in turbulent iniquity: The problem before her is to bring “physic” to ailing ideology. What is at stake is not just comedic multiplicity but a broader conception of salvation.

Shakespeare uses inconsistencies of plot and travesties of religious symbolism (e.g., crying prostitution through the marketplace) to dislocate preconceived ideas of right and wrong. These travesties (in the text and of the text) are close to (though more lighthearted than) what Kierkegaard meant when Kierkegaard,

himself wearing the mask of a pseudonym, echoes Mark 3.22: “a poet is not an apostle, he casts devils out only by the power of the devil.”⁴⁰

Hegel’s Absolute Knowing is far less poetic than a Romance drama. But its language is equally metaphorical and apocalyptic. We can all attest to the experience Hegel’s text gives us of being at sea. We nonetheless find in this wit’s “subversive depths the all-powerful note which restores Spirit to itself.”⁴¹

In conclusion, both Shakespeare and Hegel take an absolute standpoint, a standpoint which is self-consciously aware of the process of identity formation as an act of imagination, a standpoint which is the “Now” of all times and the “Space” of all spaces. They take a standpoint of Universal Wit, a theater of identity upon which the self expresses its highest insights into itself.

There are of course differences between the expressed wit of Shakespeare and that of Hegel.⁴² But the point remains that they are each attempting to express an absolute standpoint and that they each view it to be a culmination—not of tragedy or of comedy—but of wit.

If wonder is the urge to overcome contradiction at the level of consciousness, and forgiveness is the urge to overcome contradiction at the level of social spirit, then Universal Wit is the urge to overcome contradiction at the level of absolute judgment. It is a judgment which redeems time and nature. It expresses a higher justice than that expressed in the dramas of history, tragedy, and comedy.

In what follows, I look at how Universal Wit is expressed in Hegel and Shakespeare. I argue that it is a regenerative recollecting through forgiving. Then, in the final chapter of this book, I show how the notion of infection is central to Shakespeare’s and Hegel’s understandings of what *destroys* Universal Wit.

Part III. A Case of Being at Sea: How to Prosper in The Tempest of Identity

If there be not a conscience to be used in every trade,
We shall never prosper.

—Pander, in *Pericles*

As you from crimes would pardoned be,
Let your indulgence set me free.

—Prospero, Epilogue to *The Tempest*

To begin, I contrast identity-based morality with a moral imagination that has insight into identity-formation. We look closely at Universal Wit as a theater of identity by investigating Hegel’s conception of identity. Then I show how, in *The Tempest*, Prospero makes a shift from identity-based morality to a more

sophisticated moral imagination.⁴³ Prospero follows a path similar to Hegel's "Beautiful Soul" as it moves from hard-heartedness to forgiveness; from magical isolation to the reality of communal prosperity. The conclusion is that this proto-phenomenological "play" is an expression of Universal Wit. There is no epilogue to this wit since its becoming is that of a fully self-conscious community interpreting itself on the theater of identity.

The Theater of Identity

Identity and Difference

According to Hegel, identity is identity and difference.⁴⁴ We can explain this in the following way. In the expression $A = A$,⁴⁵ it is both analytically and synthetically true that the first term is identical to the second. It is synthetically true in the sense that we must bring two terms—the subject and predicate—together. This takes time. The mind holds one "A" in memory over against the new, second "A" that is present. The second "A" is not just the still present first "A," it is also that first "A" again.

We say "again" because for a moment there was the possibility that it was not self-identical. The second term in relation to the remembered first term annuls that possible difference.⁴⁶

One might argue that the possibility that it is not self-identical is not in any way necessary to identifying something. But I reply along Aristotelian lines that we are potentially cognizant of the object prior to our being actually cognizant of it. We cannot cognize anything prior to our cognizing it, but nor can we cognize it unless we are capable of cognizing it. So, we move from being capable (having the possibility) of cognizing it, to cognizing it. Secondly, we must make this move not once but twice. For if we do this only once, we do not have an identity, we just have a view. It is when we do it a second time that we cognize identity.

If we do it a second time without reflecting on the process, we do not raise the viewing up along with the term. Without self-consciousness, we assert "A" again, but its identical relation to the first "A" is not held *in mind*: It is asserted without insight into the theater of identity. To have an identity and know how we arrived at it, we must be aware of the double movement we make (negation and sublation of that negation in the final assertion of identity). This reveals not only the activity of the subject in knowing, but also the truth about universality: Any concrete universal is a syllogism whose middle term is difference; an identity is a synthesis rather than merely a tautology.

We can and ought to have self-knowledge in the process of identity construction if we are to truly understand the identity at hand. As mentioned,

identity construction involves moving through the space of potentiality on the way to the second viewing of the “A.” Self-consciousness is consciousness of the moment of potential difference, a potential difference which is the self’s own negative relation to its content (the “A”).

To return to the first term for a moment, in the Aristotelian reception of the form without the matter,⁴⁷ we receive a unity. This is also the case in Hegel. With merely this view, however, we have a unity but we do not have an identity. For the latter, we must reflect (on) the object of perception. The thing is initially only a determined concept, not something taken up into universality. It is only as taken up into universality that it is properly identified as self-same.

The “taking up into universality” is what takes time. Judgment takes time. The time is the time of the object as much as of the subject, for they are equally the process of knowing. We “tarry” with it.

On the subjective side, the process involves returning to a momentary state of potentiality with regard to the object in question. Difference is possibility, potentiality, the first actuality of the soul possessed of organs before it thinks. We become habituated to think what we actually know. The ability to know comes first.

On the objective side, the process is the same but articulated from the side of substance: Difference is the potentiality of the object; potentiality is the first actuality of substance before thought of the object occurs.

The soul and substantial potentiality are distinguishable insofar as the dialectic has a subjective side and an objective side. In the becoming of an identity, they are two sides of one development.

With regard to the *end-point* of identity construction, we note the following. Non-identity is sublated in the final picture. At that point, one either has only a self-identical object, or that and a new potentiality toward knowing. If one wants to be a knower, the smart way of viewing any conclusion is as a new set of actual and potential habits of thought. In this way, we see that Hegel’s consciousness is not an appropriating tyrant.

With regard to the *beginning point* of the construction, we note the following. The dialectic happens equally on the side of substance. Therefore, the “view” with which we started is not an identity free from this process of identity construction. Hegel does not adopt Fichte’s first principle of an unconditional, absolute self. For Hegel, the first moment only appears immediate. In truth, it is mediated by its object (and the potentiality of differences within that object), just as its object is mediated by it. Thus the starting point also has the moment of negative potentiality within it. It is only asserted to be what it is as a result of a sublation of that negative potentiality.

For Hegel, the principle of identity is consciousness. This principle is not an a priori transcendental subject. It is a process of making identity. Consciousness

(and identity) relies on not being in order to be. I have characterized “not being” as both temporal and potential. I have also implied that knowledge is nothing without that potentiality, even in its result.

This is not just to state the platitude that all knowledge is open-ended. The claim is much more radical: Consciousness is only possible in so far as its object in part does not exist. Identity is the unity of identity and difference. This is not to be thought only laterally extending out within the scope of conscious view: It must be thought as the ground of consciousness.

Hegel states this view clearly in *The Science of Logic* of 1831. I include the paragraph preceding that statement, since it shows how the *Phenomenology of Spirit* will ultimately be related to Hegel’s logic:

The Notion of pure science and its deduction is therefore presupposed in the present work in so far as the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is nothing other than the deduction of it. Absolute knowing is the truth of every mode of consciousness because, as the course of the *Phenomenology* showed, it is only in absolute knowing that the separation of the object from the certainty of itself is completely eliminated: truth is now equated with certainty and this certainty with truth.

Thus pure science presupposes liberation from the opposition of consciousness. It contains thought in so far as this is just as much the object in its own self, or the object in its own self in so far as it is equally pure thought. As science, truth is pure self-consciousness in its self-development and has the shape of the self, so that the absolute truth of being is the known Notion and the Notion as such is the absolute truth of being.⁴⁸

The identities (or “determinacies”) are not themselves finite objects of thought a priori. They are fixed into being finite objects by thought. That is part of the logos which thinking is: The logos which thinking is, is a dialectical process of identification.

Rather than a principle of identity, it is truer, I think, to speak of a theater of identity. I touch on this again below.

The implications of this for moral philosophy are the following. There is a difference in levels of moral imagination between using morality without insight into the theater of identity, and a moral imagination that does have insight into that theater. The former gives rise to moral categories on the basis of fixed identities, the latter to a procedure of identification that incorporates forgiveness. The shift from the former to the latter is expressed in Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* as the shift from the morally pure “Beautiful Soul” that uses identity-based morality, to the standpoint of forgiveness that is sensitive to

how we synthesize (i.e., imagine) identity. It shifts to a standpoint of absolute knowing. I argue below that a similar shift occurs in *The Tempest*.

To summarize, the truth of identity is that identity is a dialectical judgment that takes the time of difference. By recognizing the time of difference in judgment, we recognize the synthetic nature of identification; we thereby open up alternative views which are not constrained by un-dialectical, identity-based morality.

Theater of Knowledge and Globe of Drama: How the Beautiful Soul Gets There

All the dialectical moments of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* are synthetic judgments (i.e., moments in which the identity arrived at is actually the identity of difference and identity). But prior to Absolute Knowing, the consciousness making them does not realize that they are so. (Or if it does, it does not grasp the depth and breadth of what is involved.) In other words, consciousness does not know its own Concept comprehensively. Only Absolute Knowing is such a comprehensive knowing.

Absolute Knowing is a theater upon which all the previous “plays” of consciousness are recollected. It is a “succession of spirits, a gallery of images.” For the absolute knower, the central character of any of these recollected phenomenological scenes is the dialectical play itself.

I argue that this is quintessentially true of the Romance plays. Northrop Frye believes this of Shakespeare’s plays in general:

In every play that Shakespeare wrote, the central character is always the theatre itself. Shakespeare is inexhaustibly curious about the ways in which people spend every moment of their waking lives, especially when they are with other people, throwing themselves into the dramatic roles that seem to be suggested by the group they are in. In *Hamlet*, we see in the soliloquies how even in solitude we keep dramatizing ourselves to ourselves, and there are many dream-scenes, in the romances and elsewhere, showing how the dramatic impulse persists in sleep.⁴⁹

Frye goes on:

There are two words which we have derived from the classical practice of putting masks on actors, the words “hypocrite” and “person.” One is a moral term with a somewhat restricted meaning, the other is not. In the area of the “person” (from Latin *personare*, to sound through) we are all actors, and, as Jacques says in *As You Like It*, “all the world’s a stage,” which perhaps alludes to a very similar sentiment inscribed on the Globe Theatre itself.⁵⁰

A similar sentiment is inscribed in Absolute Knowing. In our constant dramatization of ourselves, we wear masks. In doing so, we can either be hypocrites or persons.

Hegel is often charged with a kind of hypocrisy in his claim to knowing absolutely. After all, does he not “take everything up” into his drama? Is not Absolute Knowing just one more mask? Perhaps there is nothing but masks? How can he claim to have got behind the masks to the real ground of our being?

According to Hegel, we never get beyond the drama of identity construction because that is what it means to be a consciousness. The character in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* who realizes this fully is the character that moves from being a Beautiful Soul to being a forgiving soul.⁵¹

The beauty of the Beautiful Soul lies in the fact that it knows that its conscientious act can always appear to be hypocrisy. It therefore chooses to withhold from acting and remain in the beauty of its own purity. It disappears into a dream world. But the rub of the world wakes the Beautiful Soul: it eventually makes a transition from being a Beautiful Soul, through the spirit of forgiveness, to Absolute Spirit. This is a movement from the dreaming separateness of conscientiousness, through the hard-heartedness of judging and broken-heartedness, to the *Dasein* of Absolute Spirit. The key to the transition is forgiveness:

Action sets the stage for conscientious judgment; and all action must be condemned as selfish in some aspect. Forgiveness, as the pure knowing of this, which brings the singular and universal aspects together, and accepts the fact that judgment is as selfish as action, gives rise to the singular self as pure knowing or community.⁵²

In Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, something analogous to this transition occurs. The themes underlying this transition are the need for us as properly social beings to recognize (a) the masks we wear on our world stage, and (b) the relationship of imagination to reality. In *The Tempest*, Prospero famously articulates the imaginative time and space of our lives:

The cloud capp’d towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on; and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.⁵³

The Tempest is a lesson in Universal Wit. It teaches that we must indulge in the imaginary in order to see the possible in what is apparently hard and fast necessity. As we will see, it also reveals how we depend on others to continue the story.

The Dialectic of the Beautiful Soul Is an Imaginative, Literary, and Dramatic Space

Before I launch into *The Tempest*, another word about why this comparison of Shakespearean drama with Hegel is particularly apt in this case. In *Hegel's Ladder*, H. S. Harris shows that imaginative worlds are central to the Beautiful Soul: "The Unhappy Consciousness cannot overcome the world; the Beautiful Soul will not let the objectivity of the world count for anything. It lives in its own dream world instead."⁵⁴

Interestingly, imaginative worlds are also central to Harris' depiction of the Beautiful Soul. He uses literary figures to exhibit the dialectic. See for example Harris' discussions of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* and of Julius and Lucinde in Friedrich Schlegel's *Lucinde*.⁵⁵ Within that literature, the characters which represent the Beautiful Soul retreat into imaginary worlds or gardens of their own.

Hegel also makes use of the literary in his account of the Beautiful Soul. When the Beautiful Soul's loving heart collides against the world and is destroyed, Hegel points us to the poet Novalis. Similarly, when the Beautiful Soul is destroyed by the ravages of hard-heartedness against the world which has destroyed the harmony of its dreams, Hegel points us to the fate of Hyperion as well as to the fate of the author of Hyperion, Hölderlin.

Furthermore, the psychological arena of imagination is central to the Beautiful Soul's transition away from being a Beautiful Soul. According to Harris, the Beautiful Soul moves beyond hard-heartedness to broken-heartedness by making use of memory and imagination. Harris gives the case of Peter's self-condemnation taking the shape of remembering Christ's face, and of his redemption coming through the community's mediation of what that face means.⁵⁶ Harris' description is worth citing in full:

The answer [to the struggle of the Beautiful Soul qua Hard Heart] is through the exchange of roles. The Hard Heart Judges its community. But when it "breaks" properly it must return to its membership in the community for its redemption; and Peter, who finds his accuser in the memory of a face, must turn likewise to the community who can remember that face. . . . The word of reconciliation exchanged between the singular sinner and the observing community who know

that we are all sinners, is the “Holy Spirit”: it is not a remembered face, but speech, *logos*, the “thereness of Spirit.” And if we take the reconciliation in its logical sense, then the community generated is the “absolute” community of all human experience.⁵⁷

In order to cease being a Beautiful Soul and join the “Republic of the Learned” (Harris’ expression for the community of Absolute Knowers) one must leave the garden of dreams and magic that belong to the genius. In order to overcome the hardness of judgment, we must be indulgent, not only in the sense of using our imaginations conscientiously. We must recognize the created, dramatic nature of ourselves, of our identities even as moral agents. In other words, we must be aware of the theater of identity.

Conclusion

Rather than a *principle* of identity, it is better to speak of a *theater* of identity. It is a theater that Hegel’s and Shakespeare’s absolute standpoints have self-consciously in view. In their work, we can see the truth of identity “rise before our eyes.”⁵⁸

The culminating dialectic of Hegel’s phenomenology is the one in which Spirit makes the transition to Absolute Spirit. It is the transition of the Beautiful Soul to forgiveness that occurs by means of consciousness’ comprehension of the nature of identity.

In *The Tempest*, such insight arises by means of and as the recognition of the moments of difference in identity formation.

The Tempest of Judgment

Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* is set on an island on which Prospero and his daughter Miranda are marooned and have been since before Miranda can remember. Early in the play, Prospero teases her memory about how they got there. She replies that the memory of her early childhood is “far off, / And rather like a dream than an assurance / That my remembrance warrants.”⁵⁹ Prospero inquires of her insight: “how is it / that this lives in thy mind? What seest thou else / In the dark backward and abysm of time?”⁶⁰

With this exchange, the play, early on, introduces a form of insight in which the difference between dream and reality is unclear. It is this insight into the abysm of time which must be brought ashore and reconciled with the actual community. The first step is to give an account of what really happened. The second is to set straight the evils which led to those events. The former wakes Miranda to the present. The latter—the setting straight of things—involves not

only the return of the Dukedom to Prospero, but a transformation of Prospero's insight from that of hard-heartedness to something more profound.

Let us deal with the former first. Prospero tells Miranda the story of how they got to be on the island. He had been Duke of Milan, but during his reign he had taken to studying books on magic, leaving the care of the state to his brother Antonio. Antonio, with the help of Alonso, the King of Naples, took over entirely and became Duke, banishing Prospero and his daughter to a leaking boat and a sure, watery death.

It is worth highlighting the way in which Prospero recounts Antonio's act: Antonio "made such a sinner of his memory / To credit his own lie, he did believe / He was indeed the Duke."⁶¹

Gonzalo (the good court councilor) had the duty to put Prospero and daughter to sea. He took pity and gave Prospero his magic books. Prospero and daughter Miranda shipwrecked on a magical island. Prospero took to the books and harnessed the magic.

This remembering of the past occurs at the start of the play. Now, let us move onto the setting-straight of things. The play's actual events begin with a ship struggling in a raging storm. We soon learn why: Prospero is using his magic to cause a tempest in order to toss the boats that are carrying, among others, Antonio and the King of Naples back from a wedding in Tunis; he is doing this in order to wash them all up on his magic island. Prospero is fulfilling his revenge.

Tempus means time. The *tempesta* (storm) which Prospero kicks up, and as a result of which the play unravels, is a confusion of and ultimately a transformation of time; what is changed is the apparent necessity involved in the unraveling of time.

The various people are washed ashore in groups, fearing the others whom they cannot find to be drowned. Among the supposed drowned is the King's son, Ferdinand. Prospero has his fairy Ariel perform the work of leading them through troubles which are the pay-back for the evil they did to Prospero in Milan.

The end of the drama is a recognition scene in which they are all joined outside of Prospero's cave. Prospero is moved by the pain he has put them through and he forgives them all. He gets his dukedom back; his daughter and Ferdinand the prince have meanwhile fallen in love. So it is one happy family in the end.

What I did not mention is that on the island everyone takes on a role not their own: The Councilor Gonzalo goes into a reverie about how he, as king of this island utopia, would rule it; on another part of the island, the drunkard crewman sings merrily that he has become king of the island. This crewman shares some of his wine with Caliban—a part-beast-part-man-part-

fish monster who normally serves Prospero. As a result, Caliban chooses to be the crewman's vassal. And finally, Antonio excites Sebastian, the King's brother, into the fantastic plot to kill the real king in order to become king himself. The main effect of the island is that the real is the unreal, and in that unreality, identities shift around.

It is this shifting around which makes it possible (for those characters that are able to develop in such an environment) to rise above identity-based morality to the standpoint of forgiveness. Among those able to grow are Prospero and the King of Naples. Not everybody rises to the occasion of forgiveness in the end. But it is with Prospero's insight that we are concerned.

Having forgiven everyone, Prospero relinquishes his magical powers, sets Ariel his fairy free, and prepares to return to his Dukedom in Milan. This end to the play is marked by an Epilogue, spoken to the audience by Prospero. Before I get to that, a few observations:

The play starts off with judgments flying: on the storm-tossed boat, all the royalty are swearing at the Boatswain. The boatswain is clear that it is not in order to save the royalty aboard that he is working so hard, but to save his own life. This is understandable to us, but not to the royalty who curse him and who want to survive just to see him hang: "Stand fast, good Fate, to his hanging: make the rope of his destiny our cable, for our own doth little advantage. If he be not born to be hanged, our case is miserable."⁶² His identity is fixed by their judgment: He is born to be hanged. Meanwhile, on the island, Prospero and Miranda remind Caliban of why their judgments about him are so harsh: He had been under their loving tutelage, but then he had attacked Miranda. As a result, Prospero refers to Caliban as a nature to whom no nurture would stick. Caliban in return judges and curses Prospero for having made him his servant. Before, Prospero had been like a father to him.

The imagined rope around the boatswain's neck is worth returning to: It serves to represent both the boatswain's condemnation and the royalty's salvation from the storm. It is a representation of fate following upon judgment; it is that which links the individual to the end assigned to him; it is the metaphor of judgment without forgiveness. When the rope is tied to the sail rather than the neck, we see that our salvation depends on the indulgence of others. At the start of the play, the storm's winds seem to be the externalization of the tempestuous, dysfunctional, and judgmental relations between the members aboard as well as of those ashore. At the end of the play, it is the human breath which fills the sails. In the Epilogue, Prospero says to the audience: "gentle breath of yours my sails must fill, or else my project fails, which was to please."

Is Prospero a Beautiful Soul? Not exactly. The play was written around 1611. Prospero comes too early in history to be a Beautiful Soul. He comes well before Kant and the Categorical Imperative upon which the development of the Beautiful Soul's conscientiousness depends. Unlike the Beautiful Soul, it

is not the moral worldview which Prospero has fled when, in Milan, or later, on the island, he takes umbrage in his books.

As for whom Prospero might represent, Frye notes the following. Some interpreters take Prospero, who is clearly a dramaturge within the drama, to be Shakespeare's representation of himself as God. Frye counters that,

[a]ctually, we find that Prospero is a fussbudget, continually running around doing things and planning more things, scolding certain people to keep them in hand, prodding other people, and generally behaving like a harried, overworked theatrical producer. In that sense he may very well be a self-portrait of Shakespeare.⁶³

The key thing is that Prospero is a dramaturge. With this we begin to see similarities between Prospero's and the Beautiful Soul's transitions to forgiveness.⁶⁴ Prospero is not forgetful of himself, the way we saw Antonio was when he convinced himself he was Duke. He has a conscience. Furthermore, the plot moves from the hermit Prospero's magical world and the hard-heartedness of characters, to a common place of forgiveness.

To make the nature of this transition to forgiveness clear, I want to focus now on the island and then on the Epilogue. The island is the place that makes the difference. It is the imaginative space where identity is displaced and the necessary is overturned by the possible. What Hegel's Beautiful Soul exhibits is how one can also get stuck in that difference, once one realizes that the difference is a potentiality onto other worlds, i.e., once one realizes that one is the creator (rather than merely implied) in the movement from "A" to "A." Conscience and evil arise from the same stem. That is what pushes the Beautiful Soul away from the political world.

When Prospero appeals to his audience for indulgence which will set him free, he is sharing his insight into Spirit. He is sharing his insight that forgiveness is the return to the mundane through a creative, human act of indulgence.⁶⁵ He is articulating his recognition first, of the necessity of escaping hypocrisy by indulging in it. He did this by becoming a magician and consciously putting on the play; second, he articulates the recognition that he then needed to descend from the throne (of the Beautiful Soul, of his magical island). In this way, Prospero is very much the figure of Shakespeare.

It is not the indulgence of the imagination in one way or another that is essential to forgiveness, but rather the indulgence per se and the recognition of it as the circumscribed freedom of the individual with the community of interpreters.⁶⁶ This realm of the imagination is the realm of Romance in general. Prospero is a figure who teaches us about this realm, and how to prosper by means of it.

So the island is a realm of imaginative indulgence where we learn to move beyond revenge and hard-heartedness. We do not remain on the island.

Forgiveness: Spirit's Epilogue

In both the section on Spirit in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and in *The Tempest*, there is an epilogue which is no epilogue: The logos, the play of moral identities and their displacements is complete. There is no moral standpoint beyond it. That is why it is the character Prospero, and not the actor who plays Prospero, who speaks the Epilogue to the audience.

Epilogue: [Spoken by Prospero]:

“Now my charms are all o'erthrown,
And what strength I have's mine own,
Which is most faint: now, 'tis true,
I must be here confin'd by you,
Or sent to Naples. Let me not,
Since I have my dukedom got,
And pardon'd the deceiver, dwell
In this bare island by your spell;
But release me from my bands
With the help of your good hands:
Gentle breath of yours my sails
Must fill, or else my project fails,
Which was to please. Now I want
Spirits to enforce, Art to enchant;
And my ending is despair,
Unless I be reliev'd by prayer,
Which pierces so, that it assaults
Mercy itself, and frees all faults.
As you from crimes would pardon'd be,
Let your indulgence set me free.” Exit.⁶⁷

We recall Hegel's dictum in Absolute Knowing: “to know one's limit is to know how to sacrifice oneself. This sacrifice is the externalization in which Spirit displays the process of its becoming Spirit in the form of *free contingent happening*.”⁶⁸ Prospero, his plots at an end, sacrifices his magic and allows what may be to be.

But Prospero also asks something of his audience. Frye comments on the Epilogue:

It is customary to end plays with epilogues, and the epilogue to *The Tempest*, spoken by Prospero, begins in the conventional manner of such things: we have tried to please you and put on a good play, so

now give us some applause and show some appreciation. But what he is soon saying is something wholly different from the conventional epilogue . . . : “And my ending is despair / Unless I be relieved by prayer [etc].” The sudden deepening of tone,—he is echoing the Lord’s Prayer—and our sudden realization that Prospero longs for release as intensely as Ariel ever did, make it clear that there is something going on more than simply an epilogue. He has used up all his magic in the play, and what more he can do depends on us. So the question arises, what do we do with the play?⁶⁹

Frye’s answer is the following. The key lies in the play at the point when Gonzalo is musing on how he would run the island as utopia. These musings give way to Sebastian and Antonio’s mockery of him:

Antonio: “What impossible matter will he make easy next?”

Sebastian: “I think he will carry this island home in his pocket and give it his son for an apple.”

Antonio “and sowing the kernels of it in the sea, bring forth more islands.”⁷⁰

Gonzalo had just also wrongly identified Tunis (from whence they had been sailing) and Carthage. Frye suggests that metaphorically, the identification is right. He further notes that we should use a similar metaphorical gesture and identify (this magical) drama with our reality. Thus Frye writes

Well, he’ll take the island home and give it to his son for an apple; his son will then sow the seeds in the sea and bring forth more islands. And perhaps that is in the long run what we are supposed to do with the play. The magical island sinks back into the sea as we leave the theatre, but we have still with us the kernels of an imagination that in our own way, whether we are dramatists or not, may sow themselves and bring forth more magical islands of our own.⁷¹

So for Frye, we take the play home like an apple in the pocket and produce more plays. Spelled out, we take this key—the reversal of illusion and reality, this place of displaced identities—and have it as the place where we go to indulge our conflicts. Since the play is about forgiveness of past crimes and projections of future thriving, we, like Prospero (though no more powerful than Prospero) use our magic, our imaginations, to set things straight. This

involves indulgence in the rupture between reality and illusion, an indulgence which inverts the relation of reality and illusion so that we can see the dramatic character of our own reality.

On the island of our imagination, we see the potentiality of things which otherwise seem to be necessary: We see the potentiality of differences in identities; more abstractly, we see them as a difference in identity.

The principle of forgiveness is one of recognizing that any identity necessarily involves suppression and difference. No viewpoint is outside of this.

Conclusion

The epi-logos does not take us beyond logos. We never get beyond the logos. We just see how we are the wind which was blowing the sails of the narrative, which, in a properly self-conscious community, is there to please.

Chapter 12

Absolute Infections and their Cure

Let me, if not by birth, have lands by wit: All with me's meet that I can
fashion fit.

—Edmund, *King Lear*¹

But no perfection is so absolute / That some impurity doth not pollute.

—Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece*²

[O]ur erected wit maketh us know what perfection is and yet our infected will
keepeth us from reaching unto it.

—Sidney³

The imperfect is our paradise.

—Wallace Stevens⁴

Yet nature is made better by no mean / But nature makes that mean. So over
that art / Which you say adds to nature is an art / That nature makes.

—Polixenes, *Winter's Tale*⁵

Introduction

Universal Wit is what I have called the absolute standpoint in Hegel and Shakespeare. It is that which works best for the benefit of one and all. Its counterpart is what I call "Universal Sovereign Will." In the *Winter's Tale*, the jealous King Leontes is such a will. He terrorizes his kingdom. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the Universal Sovereign Will is the "Pure Insight" of the Enlightenment. It leads to the Terror of the French Revolution.

In both the *Winter's Tale* and in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, what I am calling the Universal Sovereign Will is expressed by Shakespeare and Hegel as "an infection." I argue below that it is an absolute infection: The will that is infected considers the self to be absolutely sovereign; that self universalizes its viewpoint; and the effects of the self's infection are felt by everyone.

The infections in question result in deaths. In the *Winter's Tale*, the pregnant Queen is imprisoned and her first son (Mamilius) dies of grief; the husband of the Queen's friend is killed by a bear as he seeks to follow the King's command to destroy the newborn daughter. By the end of the tragic first half of the play, it is reported that the Queen herself, upon hearing of the death of her son, has died.

In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel describes Pure Insight as an infection permeating society. The infection eventually destroys superstition. On its way, it also destroys what are to it cultural pathogens: First it destroys royalty, then all that stands in the way of Enlightenment self-understanding. The lineage of wit, turned pure insight, turned utility, ends with the rolling of heads.

Thus the revolution through humor that is suggested in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* account of the Enlightenment⁶ turns out to be the bloody and serious revolution by guillotine.⁷ It does, first, because the negative principle of subjectivity, the infinite negative judgment of the Enlightenment, becomes the abstract social negative of Terror. Second, this development does not coincide with a development of ethical institutions capable of controlling that negative. In other words, wit as pure insight has not developed the ethical institutions within which it will be contained. The Terror is wit (with all its performative naivety) as a pervasive, social phenomenon. As we shall see, Pure Insight is the social expansion of (Hal's) wit that has cut itself off from the body (of differences); that infection reaches its fever in the Terror.⁸

In earlier chapters, without expressing it as such, we traced the *mechanisms* of infection. We did so when we discussed anti-*Aufhebung*, genius, Fate, and mere negation of negative infinite judgment (as opposed to its sublation). We also discussed the forces opposing the infection, such as *Aufhebung*, wonder, wit, sublation; we traced their development into the social structures of forgiveness and justice as expressed by Universal Wit.

We now leave aside the various mechanisms of infection (in the various kinds of consciousness and societies) in order to look at the source of infection.

We have discussed how negation (in relation to an immediacy that is apparently given) is the moment of difference. In the dialectic that develops from this moment, differences proliferate. Our concern in this chapter is with this proliferation in the sense of the fecundity of body and of Spirit; in particular, we are concerned with biological and conceptual progeny. We have seen that a hallmark of Universal Wit is a healthy though turbulent self-knowing in and through difference. The hallmark of infection, of Universal Sovereign Willing, is a narcissism that is necessary and internal to conception (conception in terms

of the generation of life and in terms of the generation of concepts). The cure is the inoculation by means of that very infection.

Part I. Renaissance and Shakespearean Meanings of "Infection"⁹

Shakespeare's life-span (1564–1616) follows upon the great plagues of Europe. It falls short of the Black Plague of London in 1665. The plague was generally considered to be the scourge of God, the cure for which lay in religious behavior. This setting influences Shakespeare's use of the term.

In Shakespeare, "infection" indicates "the state of being tainted with disease" or it refers to "a contagious disease, a plague."¹⁰ As a metaphor, it conveys the same. For example, Sicinius refers to Coriolanus as a "disease that must be cut away"¹¹ and Brutus says of him "Pursue him to his house and pluck him thence, / Lest his infection, being of catching nature, / Spread further."¹²

Similarly, "infectious" means "having the plague" or "communicating a disease, contagious."¹³ Shakespeare uses it metaphorically to indicate the presence or the spreading of something very bad. For example, Othello, when reminded of the handkerchief, says that it comes over his memory "As doth the raven o'er the infectious house." (The Norton Shakespeare editors clarify that "the raven was thought to be an ill omen and a carrier of plague.")¹⁴

In Shakespeare, the verb "to infect" means to affect "in any manner, but always contrary to wishes" or to "taint with disease, to pollute, to poison."¹⁵ Thus Hamlet says angrily to his mother: "rank corruption, mining all within, / Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven."¹⁶

The verb "to infect" is used by Shakespeare no less than forty-four times in his corpus. This, along with the use of the other forms of the word, speaks to the prevalence of the plague and awareness of infection in general in Shakespeare's time.

The presence of the plague is one thing that differentiates Shakespeare's use from ours. There are other important differences. First, in Shakespeare's time, the underlying medical theory of disease causation was very different from ours. Shakespeare's adjective "infected" draws on the idea of being influenced by the stars or by fortune. In medical theories of his time, infection was often thought to be an influence from the stars that causes miasma (that is what *influenza* means). It also was associated with (the Galenic notion of) an illness caused by an imbalance of the four humors in the body. If one is infected, one has something in one that was "not implanted by nature, but as it were caught; factitious."¹⁷ Apemantus says to Timon "This is in thee a nature but infected, / A poor unmanly melancholy, sprung / From change of fortune."¹⁸

Second, infection bore moral and religious connotations: One could be infected with morally inappropriate feelings. (For example, Hal protests that he tried on the crown because he thought his father was dead, rather than because

he lusted after it: He says the crown did not “infect his blood with joy.”¹⁹) Such infections showed one’s moral or religious condition.

If one was infected by the stars and/or had an imbalance of humors, then that was likely the result of some sin. For example, Lady Macbeth’s doctor watches her nightmarish sleepwalking. We, the audience know that her troubled sleep is due to her memories of her horrid crimes. But her doctor is unaware of the cause of her distress. He nonetheless associates her illness with some hidden wickedness: “infected minds / To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets.” He says that “This disease is beyond my practice”²⁰ and calls for God’s intercession: “More needs she the divine than the physician. / God, God forgive us all!”²¹

Well before she actually falls ill, Lady Macbeth associates her wickedness with illness. At that point, she sees nothing but strength in such illness and blames her husband for not having it. That is, she chides hesitant Macbeth for not being wicked enough to do murder: “Thou wouldst be great, / Art not without ambition, but without / The illness should attend it.”²²

In Lady Macbeth’s case, we can agree that her brains are infected with her own wicked deeds and that therefore there is some justification for her subsequent real illness. The rub of course comes when innocent people are ill and yet are treated as having brought their illness on by sinning. As mentioned, such was the case with the Plague—“Great plagues remain, by reason of the ungodly.”²³

The Renaissance concept of sin is both simple and complex. It is so in ways that mirror the struggle in the sciences (and therefore in medicine) between the Church’s authority and the burgeoning Renaissance scientific spirit of secular inquiry.²⁴ On the one hand, the notion of sin is simple in the sense that sin is a result of the fall of Adam wreaking havoc and chaos on God’s created world. The Elizabethans had a “double vision” of the world: The world was both the perfection of God’s ordered universe and the chaotic world of fallen man—“the glory of creation and the havoc sin made of it.”²⁵ One’s fallen condition was “paired with” the divine glory “through the contemplation of the divine order of the created universe.”²⁶ One returned from the fallen world through God’s grace and Christ’s atonement. On the other hand, the complexity of the Elizabethan idea of sin is related to the problem of attributing individual responsibility for sin (and therefore also for illness). Sin could be attributed to someone even though the origins did not lie within the scope of the sinner’s actions: Thus Edmund’s bastard condition (in *Lear*) or Richard III’s malformed body were signs of their evil nature. In Richard III’s case, his evil nature is deemed responsible for his malformed body.

A sin may also be outside the purview of conscience, as I have argued is the case for Macbeth. His crime was a result, at least in part, of his having been swayed by witches. The progressive infection of his kingdom with “unnatural deeds” and the eventual death of his imagination are signs of disease. We have already discussed the difficulty of finding out who is responsible for the origin

of that infection. We saw that Hegel, in order to protect his doctrine of individual responsibility from doctrines of magical influence, would have Macbeth bear full responsibility. This is consistent with Hegel's view that we must take responsibility for original sin. But as I have argued, Macbeth is a pre-modern man, not a (Hegelian) Lutheran; he belongs to the Elizabethan worldview in which personal responsibility, magic, and original sin are not clearly demarcated. (Of course, I agree with Hegel that *our* responsibility is to endorse in ourselves a more modern conception of responsibility. But Hegel's confusion about Macbeth is ironic because it suggests that, when Hegel was interpreting Macbeth, Hegel's anxiety about upholding the modern notion of responsibility got the better of him—the way a superstition would.)

As for further complexities, I have also argued above that conscience's worry about being able to recognize its own sin is Hamlet's biggest concern: Something is indeed "rotten in the state of Denmark,"²⁷ but what and who is responsible?

On one level, in the Elizabethan view, all individual responsibility is irrelevant because we are all infected with original sin and living in a fallen world; we remain so until we find salvation through Christ. Sin is the infection and Christ is the cure. But as the case of Hamlet shows, Elizabethan ethical life required proper understanding of one's condition. Wit and will had to be engaged even if salvation came through grace. A further complication arose when that by means of which a person sought clarification was infected. What was to be done when wit and will were infected with sin?

Tillyard explains that

If the fall of man had dimmed his understanding [his wit], even more had it infected his will. For though it was possible to make a wrong choice through an error of judgement, it was also possible for the will to be so corrupt as to go against the evidence of the understanding.²⁸

Tillyard gives Othello and Lear as possible cases of impaired understanding.²⁹

The case of Richard III takes responsibility to the other extreme. He understands perfectly well what he is doing. He uses his "infection" to his advantage. For example, in a wonderful double entendre, Richard uses the medieval notion that love is an infection of sight³⁰ to woo a woman whose husband and father he has just murdered:

Richard Gloucester: [Richard III]: "Why dost thou spit at me?"

Lady Anne: "Would it were mortal poison for thy sake."

Richard Gloucester: "Never came poison from so sweet a place."

Lady Anne: "Never hung poison on a fouler toad.
Out of my sight! Thou dost infect mine eyes."

Richard Gloucester: "Thine eyes, sweet lady, have infected mine."³¹

As we have discussed, Richard's eventual demise shows that the snake was always mortally infected with his own poison. The cure is not the spreading of poison, however wittily one does it.

By way of summary, then, for the Elizabethan, infection often had a moral character associated with original sin which was further lined up in sometimes simple, sometime complex ways (though not in any rationally satisfactory way—and indeed often in patently repulsive ways for our ethical standards) with individual responsibility and identity. This made it hard to know just what powers (of reason or grace) were to be called upon for salvation and cure.

Let me mention one final difference between our notion of infection and the Elizabethan one. They believed that the touch of a royal person could cure scrofula. In *Macbeth*, Malcom reports in detail on how the king of England does this. Malcom says it is called curing "the king's evil."³² This salutary royal touch is the opposite of a Universal Sovereign Will.

Part II. The Universal Sovereign Will of the Jealous King: Infection in the *Winter's Tale*

The words infect, infected, infection, and infectious are frequent in the *Winter's Tale*, appearing in a manner that makes them central to the play. The main infection is that of King Leontes' jealousy. I show that the concept of infection in the play involves a tension in the play concerning proper conception. That tension is symbolized by the argument between Perdita and Polixenes about natural growth vs. grafting; I discuss this later in the chapter.³³

The King's Infection

Leontes' jealousy of his Queen (Hermione) arises because she is able to convince Polixenes (king of Bohemia) to extend his visit when Leontes could not prevail on him to do so. His jealousy is exacerbated when he sees Hermione and Polixenes holding hands. At the sight of that, Leontes says to himself:

Too hot, too hot:
To mingle friendship farre is mingling bloods.
I have *tremor cordis* on me. My heart dances,
But not for joy, not joy. This entertainment

May a free face put on, derive a liberty
 From heartiness, from bounty, fertile bosom,
 And well become the agent. 'T may, I grant.
 But to be paddling palms and pinching fingers,
 As now they are, and making practiced smiles
 As in a looking-glass; and then to sigh, as 'twere
 The mort o'th' deer—O, that is entertainment
 My bosom likes not, nor my brows.³⁴

Within a few moments of this, Leontes expresses awareness that he has an infectious affect growing in him that he is unable to stop:

Affection, thy intention stabs the centre.
 Thou dost make possible things not so held,
 Communicat'st with dreams—how can this be?—
 With what's unreal thou coactive art,
 And fellow'st nothing. Then 'tis very credent
 Thou mayst co-join with something, and thou dost—
 And that beyond commission; and I find it—
 And that to the infection of my brains
 And hard'ning of my brows.³⁵

Infection is a kind of adverse synthesis, a bad imagination. It makes the infected one think that his or her bad dreams are somehow real. We have seen it work as anti-*Aufhebung*—a downward spiral into psychological hell.³⁶ We have discussed these general mechanisms before. What are the traits of sovereign infection in Leontes?

First, Leontes is infected at a distance. He does not touch or breathe something in: He *sees*. His infection is therefore not a contagion. In Shakespeare, *contagion* means “communication of a disease by contact” (as in Hamlet: “hell itself breaths out contagion to this world.”³⁷) Contagion is often associated with breath, but can also be a poison (as in Laertes’ touching of his sword with it: “I’ll touch my point with this contagion.”³⁸) The words “contagion” and “contagious” are not present at all in the *Winter’s Tale*.

Second, Leontes is affected by *seeing* Hermione’s physical familiarity with Polixenes. His being infected by this is a perversion of the medieval idea of love being an infection through sight (that matter is transferred from the object seen to the eye and that therefore love at first sight is a kind of touching).

Third, it is not the external event of her persuading his friend, nor the sights *themselves* that are ill-tidings. Leontes’ infection is due to his fabricated *interpretation of* the fact and the images transmitted in sight. His affected perceptions and thoughts then go “to the infection of [his] brains.”³⁹

Fourth, as the infection spreads, it becomes more than jealousy. It proliferates into issues about cuckolding, about the legitimacy of his progeny, about the evils of womankind with regard to sex and offspring. In his mind, womankind becomes the source of infection. Moments earlier, the unstoppable infection was an affect; now, the unstoppable infection is womankind's sexual impropriety, of which he says: "Physic for't there's none."⁴⁰

Leontes universalizes his view. All women, all around the globe, are at fault:

From east, west, north, and south, be it concluded,
No barricade for a belly. Know't,
It will let in and out the enemy
With bag and baggage. Many thousand on's
Have the disease and feel't not.⁴¹

This is what a Universal Sovereign Will does. Its internal structure of infection infects the entire shape of things. In particular, it produces an absolute conception about the nature of conception. It is a perverse Absolute Knowing. Since we are dealing with a king, the impact of his will is also devastating to the kingdom (even if not everyone does as he commands them). I will return to the *Winter's Tale* later.

Part III. Infections of Thought in Hegel⁴²

In Hegel's time, the theory of germs and their role in contagion had been suggested but not accepted. It was not until the 1860s, three decades after Hegel's death, that Pasteur in France and Koch in Germany proved that germs existed and were the cause of certain diseases. The word "infection" (in German "*Ansteckung*") therefore meant something different to Hegel than it does to us.⁴³ This is evident in his uses of it in his *Philosophy of Nature*. Not only is it used in his discussion of disease,⁴⁴ Hegel also uses the word "infection" to denote a transformation in digestion,⁴⁵ and (even more strangely for us), in his discussion of magnetism.⁴⁶

Furthermore, Hegel uses the term "infection" seven times in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Generally, it refers to the infection of Spirit by the universal character of the "I" in language. It comes up the first time as the universal infection of the "I" in the language of culture, second, as the infection or "permeating perfume" of the simple negativity of Pure Insight in the Enlightenment, and third, as the universal infection of the self with itself, through the language of hymns, in the section on Abstract Art in Religion.⁴⁷

Part IV. Universal Sovereign Will as Pure Insight:
Infection in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*

In what follows, I show that, in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, overcoming the infection internal to the structure and language of the self both drives consciousness to Absolute Knowing and inoculates it against further infection.⁴⁸

Hegel's use of "infection" in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* draws from his biological notion of it as relating to disease, to digestion, and to his use of it as a principle in magnetism. My conclusion that this is the case is based on the following observations.

First, there is a sense in which the self, throughout the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, is itself the disease, that it must become inoculated against itself in order to have the healthy knowledge of itself as a concrete universal. Second, this self-inoculation is a kind of self-consumption. Therefore, the infection relates to the organism's ability to digest its otherness. Third, the role of "infection" in magnetism is equally important if we are to understand the *conceptual* character (in the Hegelian sense of the Concept) of the disease of the self and its cure.

Hegel rejected the monochromatic, formalistic character of the philosophy of nature of his time because it did not proceed speculatively. His account of infection in magnetism exhibits precisely the dialectical, Notional character that he thought was missing in contemporary theories: And *that physical* dialectic is expressed, more complexly, in the biological dialectic of infection. Therefore, Hegel's use of the word "infection" in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* relies on the biological character of digestion and illness and on the dialectical character of magnetism.

This conclusion underscores Hegel's claim that the illnesses of the mind are also *physical*.⁴⁹ In other words, when spirit is infected, the social, political "body" and individual bodies become ill.

Let me begin by stating in brief the story of infection in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

The self at the beginning of the *Phenomenology* is *implicitly* spiritually sick because it has no comprehension of dialectic. Its *self-infection* and *actual disease* begin with alienation in language in Culture (a symptom of which is wit); the infection then invades spirit universally during the permeation of Pure Insight in the Enlightenment. The high point of the illness is the Terror—a kind of spiritual fever. Spirit's *cure* begins with that fever, but only ends when Spirit has fully inoculated itself by digesting its self-illnesses. This is the cure of the individual self as concrete universal "I" in Absolute Knowing.

Before I develop this, let me deal with some objections. If my thesis is right, why doesn't Hegel characterize the *Phenomenology* in terms of diseases of the self and their cure? His use of medical terms in the *Phenomenology* is

extremely meager: Aside from his seven uses of the term infection, there are very few other references to illness or disease in the book.

For example, there is no entry in the *Phenomenology* for “infectious” (“*Infectionen*” in the German or “*Infectiös*”). Neither is there an appearance of the word *die Seuche* (epidemic) or *die Pest* (the Plague). Nor does *die Fieber* (fever) appear. There is one appearance of *die Schwindsucht* (Consumption = tuberculosis). It occurs in the discussion of the Beautiful Soul: The “beautiful soul . . . disordered to the point of madness, wastes itself in yearning and pines away in consumption.”⁵⁰

Neither the term vaccination nor inoculation (which is the same in German—*die Impfung*; *die (Schutz)impfung, sind Sie schon geimpft?*) nor the term variolation (*die Variolation* = *Impfung gegen Pocken*) appear at all in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

The term *die Krankheit* (illness or disease) comes up only three times⁵¹ and *Krankheiten* only once.⁵²

Given this sparse use of medical terminology and the fact that Hegel does not himself define the *Phenomenology* as a whole in medical terms, it would seem that we are not justified in doing so ourselves.

My answer to these objections is that there are three reasons for reading Spirit’s trials in terms of infection and illness.

First, Hegel is reported to have asserted that doing dialectic badly causes “disease” and is a sign that one is in fact already “spiritually sick.” In a reported discussion between Goethe and Hegel about the nature of Hegel’s dialectic (in Weimar in 1827), Goethe asks Hegel what dialectic is:

“Basically,” said Hegel, “it is nothing more than the regulated and methodical cultivation of the spirit of contradiction, which is a gift common to everyone, and particularly valuable for distinguishing the true from the false.”

“But let us hope,” interposed Goethe, “that such intellectual arts and skills are not too much misused for the purpose of turning falsehood into truth and truth into falsehood!”

“That does sometimes happen,” replied Hegel, “but only with people who are spiritually sick.”

“Well,” said Goethe, “I personally recommend the study of nature as preventive of that disease.”⁵³

Dialectical thinking helps distinguish the true from the false. But in the spiritually ill, it turns truth into falsehoods and falsehoods into truth. Goethe recommends the study of nature as prophylactic against this disease. I believe that Hegel would recommend the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Why? First, because according to Hegel, nature must be comprehended dialectically. Second, because

the *Phenomenology of Spirit* shows us the sickness of our thinking and the causes of that sickness (basically, our failing to do dialectic well); in so doing so, the *Phenomenology* cures us.

A second reason for talking of the *Phenomenology* in this way has to do with the fact that, as Eric von der Luft shows, Hegel's notion of "Spirit" is born out of a failure of medicine (in particular, out of the *caput mortuum* of phrenology),⁵⁴ and it could not have arisen without this failure. So Spirit is from its inception related to medicine.

The place of nature in the *Encyclopaedia*, as the dialectical midpoint between logic and spirit, and the place of medicine, as the culmination of this investigation of nature, just at the point of the important transition of the human being from a mere animal to a spiritual being (*geistiges Wesen*) together indicate that *for Hegel medicine plays a special role in the development of spirit*.⁵⁵

In other words, the inability of reason to find itself in the body as mere object inaugurates the discovery of the self as embodied self-relation to other embodied selves. (Whether the body is ultimately transfigured into the Word—as suggested by the fact that Spirit's infection is linguistic—is a question which I will address later.)⁵⁶

Furthermore, Luft and others point out that phrenology was a necessary failure, without which the notion of spirit would not have arisen:

Unless it had first passed through the stage of phrenology, this self-consciousness would not have been able to achieve any deep appreciation of the essentially holistic character of spirit, and thus would not have been able to become either rational self-consciousness or spirit. In the *Encyclopaedia* the transition is directly from the end of medicine to the growth of spirit.⁵⁷

One might add parenthetically to this that in the passages where Hegel does speak of illness in his Preface,⁵⁸ Hegel is complaining about the formalism of contemporary philosophy of nature, and he chooses a prevalent medical view as his example. (That is, Hegel refers to Brownianism, a medical view stemming from John Brown's *Elementa medicinae* 1780).⁵⁹ It is thus in part against the failure of current medical views that Hegel launches his *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

But perhaps one still doubts that we can legitimately talk about the *Phenomenology* in terms of the infections and the cure of the concrete universal. I might tangentially reply that the absence of medical terminology in Hegel's book is strange given the huge impact of disease on the human social development

he attempts to explain. (In the Plague years in Europe (1345–1351), “it was estimated that one in three people were lost—a total of 40 million worldwide;”⁶⁰ the loss of manpower due to the plague caused massive transformations in trade and agriculture, resulting in the decline of the feudal system.⁶¹) My objectors would reply that the absence of these important facts highlights the lack of Hegel’s concern in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* for the role of infection and disease in the history of self-consciousness.

But I therefore ask: Why then *does* Hegel use the term “infection” at all and why in *those* places?

Let me develop my thesis in more detail.

In the *Philosophy of Nature*, Hegel writes that “The original disease of the animal, and the inborn germ of death, is its being inadequate to universality.”⁶² My argument is that *Spirit’s* innate germ of disease is the presence of the particular and universal “I” in the singular individual. This eventually creates a fever in Spirit (the Terror), the initial recovery from which leaves Spirit high and dry in the autonomy of Kantian moral individuality. Moral individuality marks the end of the fever, but not the end of the disease. That is, the cure begins with the Terror. But the cure is not complete until the surviving individuals realize their concrete human lives as Absolute Spirit.

Let us look more closely at this infection, fever and cure of the concrete universal. The story can only begin in Spirit, for it is an infection proper to the “I” that is a “we.” The conflict in the self takes on the nature of an *infection* when the self’s infinite judgment becomes universalized in the sense that it permeates social awareness.

The self’s infinite judgment *starts* this process of becoming universalized with the language of wit. As we have seen, wit arises when culture is alienated from itself. In that alienation, the vanishing character of the word “I” legitimates and is the symptom of the crisis of earnest social identity. This marks the first appearance of the word “infection” in the book:

Language, however, contains it [the “I”] in its purity, it alone expresses the “I,” the “I” itself. This *real* existence of the “I” is, *qua* real existence, an objectivity which has in it the true nature of the “I.” The “I” is this particular “I”—but equally the *universal* “I”; its manifesting is also at once the externalization and vanishing of *this* particular “I,” and as a result the “I” remains in its universality. The “I” that utters itself is *heard* or *perceived*; it is an **infection** in which it has immediately passed into unity with those for whom it is a real existence, and is a universal self-consciousness. That it is *perceived* or *heard* means that its *real existence dies away*; this its otherness has been taken back into itself; and its real existence is just this: that as a self-conscious Now, as a real existence, it is *not* a real existence,

and through this vanishing it *is* a real existence. This vanishing is thus itself at once its abiding; it is its own knowing of itself, and its knowing itself as a self that has passed over into another self that has been perceived and is universal.⁶³

The conflict progresses to *universal* infection when Rameau's Nephew's wit becomes the prevailing attitude of culture in the Enlightenment. This is Pure Insight, the appearance of what I am calling the Universal Sovereign Will. It is the second instance of "infection" in the book:

Whatever wedges of any sort may be driven into consciousness, it is *in itself* this simplicity in which everything is dissolved, forgotten, and unbiased, and which therefore is absolutely receptive to the Notion. It is on this account that the communication of pure insight is comparable to a silent expansion or to the *diffusion*, say, of a perfume in the unresisting atmosphere. It is a penetrating **infection** which does not make itself noticeable before hand as something opposed to the indifferent element into which it insinuates itself, and therefore cannot be warded off. Only when the **infection** has become widespread is that consciousness, which unheedingly yielded to its influence, *aware of it*. For though the nature of what consciousness received into itself was simple and homogeneous with it, yet it was also the simplicity of an introreflected *negativity* which subsequently also develops, in keeping with its nature, into something opposed to it and thereby reminds consciousness of its previous state. This simplicity is the Notion, which is the simple knowing that knows itself and also its opposite, but knows this opposite to be reduced to a moment within it. Consequently, when consciousness does become aware of pure insight, the latter is already widespread; the struggle against it betrays the fact that **infection** has occurred. The struggle is too late, and every remedy adopted only aggravates the disease, for it has laid hold of the marrow of spiritual life, viz. the Notion of consciousness, or the pure essence itself of consciousness. Therefore, too, there is no power in consciousness which could overcome the disease. Because this is present in the essence itself, its manifestations while still isolated, can be suppressed and the superficial symptoms smothered. . . . [B]eing now an invisible and imperceptible Spirit, it infiltrates the noble parts through and through [*durchschleicht sie die edlen Teile durch und durch*] and soon has taken complete possession of all the vitals and members of the unconscious idol; then "one fine morning it gives its comrade a shove with the elbow, and bang! Crash! the idol lies on the floor"

[Diderot's *Rameau's Nephew*]. On "one fine morning" whose noon is bloodless if the **infection** has penetrated to every organ of spiritual life. Memory alone then still preserves the dead form of the Spirit's previous shape as a vanished history, vanished one knows not how. And the new serpent of wisdom raised on high for adoration has in this way painlessly cast merely a withered skin.⁶⁴

The high point of that universalization process is a social fever—the Terror of the Enlightenment.

Hegel makes explicit reference to infection in the first two moments. My argument requires that Hegel also refer to the *Terror* in terms of infection and disease. But here, Hegel does *not* refer to infection. Nonetheless, the comparison is easy to make. For Hegel describes Pure Insight in way that makes it an exact analogue of Life, and his description of the Terror is analogous to fever, and fever, Hegel writes, is the "pure life of the diseased organism." Let us tease these comparisons out.

Pure Insight and Life

In the section prior to the Enlightenment, called "Faith and Pure Insight," Hegel writes that:

Pure consciousness . . . is reflection out of the world of culture in such a way that the Substance of that world, and also the "masses" or groups into which it is articulated, are shown to be what they are in themselves, *spiritual essentialities, absolutely restless processes or determinations which are directly cancelled in their opposite. Their essence, simple consciousness, is thus the simplicity of absolute difference which is at once no difference.* Consequently, it is *pure being for self*, not as this single self but as *the immanently universal self in the form of a restless process which attacks and pervades the passive essence of the "matter in hand."* In it is thus to be found the certainty that at once knows itself to be the truth, pure thought as *the absolute Notion in the might of its negativity, which eliminates everything objective that supposedly stands over against consciousness, and makes it into a being which has its origin in consciousness.* This pure consciousness is at the same time equally simple, just because its difference is no difference.⁶⁵

In the section on Life, Hegel writes of Life that

Essence is infinity as the *supersession* of all distinctions, the pure movement of axial rotation, its self-repose being absolutely restless

infinity; *independence* itself, in which the differences of the movement are resolved, the simple essence of Time. . . . The differences, however, are just as much present as *differences* in this simple universal medium; for this universal flux has its negative nature only in being the supersession of them; but it cannot supersede the different moments if they do not have an enduring existence.⁶⁶

In Hegel's biology, the organic individual is both the genus "Life" and not the genus "Life." The failure of the organic individual to be the universal life is the germ of disease which ultimately brings on the death of the individual, but which Life survives. This has its counterparts in Spirit: The individual self is both the life of the universal "I" and not the life of the universal "I." The failure of the self-conscious individual to be the universal life of "I" is the germ of disease which destroys the individual consciousness, but which "we" survive.

Pure Insight, like the genus Life, is the "simplicity in which all is dissolved."⁶⁷ The infection is the self's simplicity permeating all selves. The infection thereby unleashes the reality of the limitation of each individual self as existent only insofar as it is also a vanishing. In other words, the infection of Pure Insight makes us each actually the universal "I" that is "we," but we are each only actual insofar as each of us is limited by death. In Pure Insight, our selves are fully manifest in the universality and vanishing experience of the word "I." But this means that the necessity of the death of the individual is now also part of the picture.

It is true that Life does not "attack" its members as the might of the Notion's negative is said to do in the citation above about pure consciousness. But Life's members attack each other for food, and Life as their essence—the selfish gene—is indifferent to the individual. Furthermore, despite the impersonal shape of the mushroom cloud, or the absence of aid to war-stricken countries, the negative attack is brought into *existence* by individuals whose aims do not involve the needs of others.

At first—in the opposition of Faith and Pure Insight—the infection does not take many lives. There are deaths in the struggle and counter-struggle but so far these deaths are isolated (for example, the counter-struggle by faith leads to burning Bruno at the stake⁶⁸). But in the infection's feverish climax, *many* *real* selves perish under the guillotine—the universal "I"'s *caput mortuum*.

The Terror and Fever

As I mentioned above, according to Hegel's biology "fever constitutes the pure life of the diseased organism."⁶⁹ Life and Pure Consciousness (or the "I" in language) are each the kind of universality that, on the one hand, needs the individuals to exist, but on the other, only exists in the vanishing of those individuals.

According to Hegel, disease is when a part of the organism asserts itself as autonomous. The organism seeks to overcome it:

The organism is in a *diseased* state when one of its systems or organs is *stimulated* into conflict with the inorganic potency of the organism. Through this conflict, the system or organ establishes itself in isolation, and by persisting in its particular activity in opposition to the activity of the whole, obstructs the fluidity of this activity, as well as the process by which it pervades all the moments of the whole.⁷⁰

In saying that fever is the pure life of the diseased organism, Hegel means that fever is the life of the organism struggling to overcome the autonomy of whatever organ or bodily system is causing the illness; it does so by engaging the entire body in a war-like response that aims to subsume the autonomous back within the fluidity of the wholeness of the individual's organic life.

By analogy, in the struggle of Enlightenment with superstition, the autonomous "I" spreads through society. That very autonomy is the illness of Spirit. Once that autonomy becomes embodied in the notion of utility, in which objects and people are means to ends, then the infection has made Spirit ill. Each individual is (only) an autonomous "organ" that threatens the holistic fluidity of Spirit. At the peak of this illness—the Terror—Spirit reacts against the autonomy of individuality (that is, against its own autonomous and therefore offending organicity).⁷¹ Negating Spirit is the pure life of its own diseased social self-consciousness.

This self-relatedness of disease is articulated by Hegel in the following way: disease is "a *disproportion* of its being and its self."⁷² In disease, "the organism . . . exhibits the opposed forms of being and self, the self being precisely that for which the negative of itself has being."⁷³

To help clarify this, consider a stone. A stone can be destroyed, but it cannot be destroyed by illness because a stone "is not the negative of itself which overlaps (*übergreift*) its opposite."⁷⁴ Similarly, hunger is a feeling of lack, but in "appetite this lack is something external, that is, the self is not turned against its structure (*Gestalt*) as such, whereas in disease the negative thing is the structure itself."⁷⁵ What is missing in the destruction of the stone or in hunger is the dialectical infection proper to magnetism.

If fever constitutes the pure life of the diseased organism, the Terror constitutes the pure consciousness of the diseased Spirit. According to Hegel's biology, fever is the beginning of the cure: "As a course which is inherent in the *totality* of the organism . . . , and which is opposed to the *isolated* activity, fever constitutes to an equal extent, the organism's incipient inclination towards *recovery*,"⁷⁶ "... although fever is certainly a morbid state and a disease, it is also the means by which the organism cures itself."⁷⁷

According to Hegel, fever cures by digesting the disease: "As fever is both the constitution and fluidification of this succession of functions, the disease is simultaneously sublated by it, i.e., digested by its motion."⁷⁸ We recall from the *Philosophy of Nature* that one of the meanings of infection is transformation in digestion. This means that it is through "infection" in the sense of a digestive transformation that "infection" in the sense of disease is sublated. This suits our analysis of the disease of the self, for it is both a process of infection by the self of the self whereby the self becomes ill, and an infection by the self of the self, whereby it is cured.⁷⁹

In the Terror, the self digests its offensive self. It initially looks like the free self rejecting sovereignty, but it turns into the Universal Sovereign Self attacking other selves. This is a type of the "I" as subject overcoming the alienation of the "I" as predicate in the tautology I = I.

The cure secures the subject side of the equation—the Kantian autonomous self. But that is not the end of the story.

Before we go on, let me stop to deal with an objection. The use of terms like infection, illness, and cure (so the objection goes) does not work to explain what is going on with self-alienated spirit and its recovery. They do not work because illness in the body presupposes a condition of health to which the body returns after it is cured. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, spirit does not return to the condition it was in prior to the infection.

My reply is that this is why we must think about illness in terms of epidemiology (and the pervasion of concepts) rather than *just* about the individual body's illness. It is why we must think about inoculation against plagues rather than a single individual's recovery from sickness. It is why we must think about inoculation against bad ideas rather than a single instance of self-development. And given the fact that health or illness (and even death) are the result of ideas, the two kinds of conception (bodily and ideational) must be thought together.

Just as human life is different as a result of the end of smallpox, Spirit's self-inoculation through infection creates a difference in and for the life of Spirit. The Kantian moral standpoint is an inoculation against the body. As such it is a one-sided solution. In the remaining sections of the *Phenomenology*, that one-sidedness eventually comes to terms with its actual, organic being—with all the interrelatedness that that being is.

Our reading is consistent with how the *Phenomenology of Spirit* explicitly begins and ends. At its start, we have a "Universal Spirit which constitutes the substance of the individual, and hence *appears externally* to him as his *inorganic nature*."⁸⁰ By the end of the *Phenomenology*, in Absolute Knowing, that inorganic nature has been turned into organic matter, thoroughly digested. Hegel writes that the absolute knower has "a gallery of images, each of which, endowed with all the riches of Spirit, moves thus slowly just because the Self

has to penetrate and *digest* this entire wealth of its substance.”⁸¹ The path from beginning to end has been that of the individual, through education, “*devouring* his inorganic nature . . . [;] this is nothing but its [universal Spirit’s] own acquisition of self-consciousness, the bringing-about of its own becoming and reflection into itself.”⁸²

Von Engelhardt explains that according to Hegel, “In the health state those fixations occurring in illness are constantly being overcome, for health too is related to those dimensions which assume independence in illness.”⁸³ Thus in the final condition of health—in Absolute Knowing—the knower is not in a condition without infections of the “I.” But he or she is spiritually inoculated: He or she can therefore digest the infections to which spirit necessarily gives rise within itself.

Spirit gives rise to its own infection because Spirit—as the “I that is a we and the we that is an I”—is both internal and external to itself, both subjective and organic life. Absolute Knowing is Spirit that has become progressively inoculated against the illness to which its self/selves gives rise. The Terror is the feverish turning point toward Spirit’s cure of its “I.”⁸⁴

The infection of Spirit with its own Pure Insight, and Spirit’s cure through the fever of the Terror is consistent with the specific view that the dead end of *Phrenology* was necessary for the development of Spirit. This in turn is just a specific case of Hegel’s general view (expressed by Von Engelhardt), that illness is necessary for “the transition from one domain of reality to the next—a function always assigned to the negative in Hegel’s philosophy.”⁸⁵

Now, my thesis is unpalatable in that it seems to support the view that the loss of innocent individuals to the guillotine is just Spirit’s self-cure on the way toward something better. Viewed epidemiologically, this would be like asserting that an epidemic that kills many would beneficially reduce human population to sustainable levels. It is simply not satisfactory to assert that such terrors are just the tragedy of ethical life, and that the resulting self-knowledge is the comedy of Absolute Knowing.

Spirit’s infection and fever only work if, into our survival of terrors, we build in a moral imperative against their recurrence. The fever must indeed be an inoculation against future infections of the kinds we have experienced. Let us hope that enough individuals are indeed inoculated against the beautiful simplicity of power ideologies.

Finally, since body and mind are united, my thesis provides a reading of Hegel’s notion of the organic death of the human individual. We do not have to understand our death as the death of the body *and* of the self, or of the death of the body *but the immortality* of the self,⁸⁶ or as the sublation of the individual into the Word. The immortality of the Spirit is always already the living, self-expressing human who is infected with and cured by the fundamentally dialectical nature of language.

Part V. Grafting: The Fabric of Things

The thinking of the Universal Sovereign Will is an infection. It thinks that there is an absolute infection that must be cured. The root of the infection is the narcissism of conception (sexual or ideational).

King Leontes kills because he cannot tolerate the idea that his offspring were not conceived by him. Pure Insight kills because it cannot tolerate that its offspring—utility—be ill-conceived by individuals (with their inherent differences from one another).

Leontes thinks that the infection is *the sin* of sexual impropriety. His infected brains come up with this idea of infection. By contrast, the infection which Pure Insight is, makes Pure-Insight thinkers think that the real infection is other people being infected with superstition and faith. In other words, a pure-insight thinker thinks that there is an infection that causes (and which is itself) the *belief in sin*.

Since infection can appear as sin or as the *belief in sin*, the way in which infection *appears* to an infected Universal Sovereign Will can be radically different, even contrary to the way the infection appears to other Universal Sovereign Wills.

What is essential to the structure of the Universal Sovereign Will's infected thinking about infection is that, as we see in both the *Winter's Tale* and in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, its essentially infected and infecting way of thinking produces an absolutizing belief about the universal extent and depth of "conceptual" infection in others (an infection in others which the Sovereign Will then tries to eradicate). In being this, the infected nature of the Universal Sovereign Will is the *Ursprung* of misconception. The Universal Sovereign Will is "conceptual" impropriety.

Absolute infection is bad, whether it is understood in the context of sin or in a context that rejects sin. The common bad thing about both Leontes and Pure Insight is that they each seek the proliferation of their view, instead of the multiplication of differences in and through otherness. Each is unable to sublimate itself, and each therefore terrorizes and kills. Each also confuses the relationship of bodies to concepts in a way that leads them to make people die for their differences.

Sin (or the belief in it) is conceived as one kind of infected fecundity. Interfering with nature (or not interfering with it) is conceived as another. The concern in the *Winter's Tale* with nature vs. grafting is a case in point. To the Universal Sovereign Will that is like Leontes, the *perceived* infection, like grafting, is "unnatural." To the Universal Sovereign Will that is like Pure Insight, the *perceived* ailment (e.g., faith), like nature, is anti-intellectual. Both of these views (that the sexual impropriety of "grafting" is bad while nature is good; that conceptual diversity is bad while utility is good) are symptoms of the *real* infection.⁸⁷

The solution is not to reject or put an end to the “unnatural” or the anti-intellectual. It is to see both nature and culture for the fabrics that they are. The second half of the *Winter's Tale* (especially the Festival) is set in the context of farmers celebrating their culture in relation to the nature they are harvesting. It is full of references to weaving and cloths of various sorts, to clothes, the exchanging of clothes, and to the importance of clothes for determining social status.⁸⁸ These facts about the play show us that Shakespeare does not hold Perdita or Polixenes' view. Rather, neither nature nor culture ever stands alone in any immediacy: They are each fabrics, and they are always grafted together.⁸⁹

As I argued in relation to Universal Wit, a proper moral imagination recognizes synthesis equally in nature and art, in body and spirit, in desire and wonder. All conception is grafting and fabric. *Ansteckung* (infection) is, in our account, related to the verb *anstecken*, which means to pin on. We saw that in *Pericles*, the needle which “cures as it wounds the cambric” is art as the twin sister of nature. For Shakespeare, as for Hegel, the cure for infection, the antidote for the narcissism of conception, is to understand the nature in our fabrications as well as the fabricated character of nature.

The cure for absolute infection therefore lies in our proper conception of the fabric of things. We move from infected conceits to weaving: The infinite point of subjectivity moves in and out of substance, each defining the other in a mutual grafting. With this knowledge, in all its grafts, we give ourselves the needle, inoculating our imagination against the narcissism inherent in conception.⁹⁰

The cure for Universal Sovereign Will is forgiveness, the return of wonder, and the reentry into the process of a developing insight by means of sublation. In Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale*, Leontes' absolute infection is turned into absolute conception through grafting. That is, the play ends with wonder at the return of what was lost (Perdita) and at the statue that comes to life.

This wonder is not a return to a natural condition. Nor is it an intellectual apex. It is not the negation of an opposite. Wonder is the urge to overcome contradiction. In absolute conception, it is the grafting of comedy onto tragedy. Paulina's husband Antigonus does not return from the dead, nor does Mamilius. Synthesis is made over graves. The fact that reunion with the fabric of things is always something of a necessary illusion is symbolized in this play by the grafting of life and stone.

In Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, absolute infection is most rampant in the spread of Pure Insight and the fever of the Terror; the root infection is non-dialectical thinking, a thinking that plagues consciousness all the way to the last chapter of the book. There, in “Absolute Knowing,” infected thinking is turned into absolute conception: The Concept knowingly mediates its self through its otherness. Absolute Knowing wonders at the cup that froths forth. This wonder is not a return to the immediacy of nature. Nor is it intellectual supremacy. Absolute Knowing knows that it is a grafting of subject and substance; of history and phenomenology; of life and the place of the skull.

Conclusion

I conclude with broad strokes. The imagination is the infection, and it is what cures us. Imagination takes the shape of ghosts, genius' oracles and merging empathies; it casts the long shadow of Fate; the imagination generates illusions of sovereign certainty and the play of wit; it generates cosmologies, illusions of grandeur, tyrannies of jealousy and of pure reason. As the negative moment in Hegelian dialectic, the imagination is the source of our self-alienation. But it is also the source of our creative responses to alienation: particularly, the response of wit.

The educated, imaginative wit is infection as inoculation. We are infected by our many imaginings, but by consciously infecting our imagination with otherness—with the imaginings of others—we inoculate ourselves against destructive repetitions, and challenge the core infection that seeks its repetition: the narcissism of conception. The first step is wonder—the urge to overcome contradiction. A next step is wit, by which we overcome (sublate) our grasping. The final step (in our rendering) is the educated embodied wit, by which, through forgiveness, we open the possibility of justice.

In the imagination's fevers, it is terror and death. To assume that policy and abstract law can digest these fevers is to appeal to an imagined principle of sovereign purity. Modern consciousness is too complex for that. We need to remind ourselves of our interconnected selves and bodies. We need to properly think the relationship of the "I" to the "we" and to the embodied individual.

Inoculation is an empathy that carries with its other without merging. It is a sympathy that allows itself to be infected with the difference which it knows it already has within it. This is not reason devoid of imagination; it is reason that knows—and knows itself to be—only in and through the imagination. At the highest levels of moral imagination, one-sided cures are not satisfactory. The just cure is mediation. The heart of mediation is insight into the role that our imaginations play in our deliberations about what we ought to do. It is the art and philosophy of grafting: The "play" of the imagination is the thing wherein we catch (and cure) the conscience of the Universal Sovereign Will. Thanks to Hegel and Shakespeare, we have more theaters of identity than Hamlet did, by which to bring about justice.

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Notes

Notes to Preface

1. *Henry V* 1.1 68 p. 1457, and *ibid.* note 8.

2. Hegel addresses the issue of anachronisms in art in his *Lectures on Aesthetics*. On the one hand, he defends the artist's need to bring the characters and events to life for the audience of the day; the artist need not be trapped by the historical "naturalness" of a time or event. "Such a transgression of so-called naturalness is, for art, a *necessary* anachronism" (*Aesth.* p. 278). So for example, "to propose to reproduce with complete accuracy of detail the purely external appearance of the rust of antiquity is only a puerile pedantry undertaken for what is itself only an external end" (*Aesth.* p. 279). To "bring every 'pathos' to light in an appearance which absolutely corresponds with it, . . . he [the artist] has to take into account in each case the culture of his time, its speech, etc." (*Aesth.* p. 278). On the other hand, according to Hegel there is another kind of anachronism that is not acceptable. One ought not to transpose

insights and ideas of a later development of the religious and moral consciousness . . . into a period or nation whose whole earlier outlook contradicts such newer ideas. Thus the Christian religion brought in its train moral categories which were foreign throughout to the Greeks. For example, the inner reflection of conscience in deciding what is good or bad, remorse, and penitence belong only to the moral development of modern times; the heroic character knows nothing of the illogicality of penitence—what he has done, he has done. [In] Orestes . . . the Eumenides are . . . represented as universal powers and not as the gnawing of his purely subjective conscience (*Aesth.* p. 278).

Unfortunately for us, Shakespeare makes use not only of the first but also the second kind of anachronism. For example, in his *Winter's Tale*, the characters

both appeal to an oracle *and* experience the pangs of conscience. The result is that our book must also, contra Hegel, engage in such anachronisms.

3. *PoS* par. 53, p. 32.

4. I am grateful to my student Neil MacGregor (University of Guelph) for his wonderful assignment for me entitled "A Hegelian Account of Othello," which he also presented at the International Association of Philosophy and Literature, University of Syracuse, May 2004.

5. *PoR* p. 10.

6. John J. Joughin, *Philosophical Shakespeares* (Routledge, 2000).

7. Colin McGinn, *Shakespeare's Philosophy: Discovering the Meaning Behind the Plays* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2006).

8. A. D. Nuttall, *Shakespeare the Thinker* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008).

9. Tzachi Zamir, *Double Vision: Moral Philosophy and Shakespearean Drama* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2007). See *The New Republic* (published Wednesday, May 07, 2008) for a review of the books by Nuttall, McGinn, and Zamir.

10. Michael Witmore, *Shakespearean Metaphysics* (New York: Continuum Press, 2008).

11. Paul Kottman, *A Politics of the Scene*, (Stanford University Press, 2007) and *Philosophers on Shakespeare* (edited by Kottman, Stanford University Press, 2009).

12. Stanley Cavell, *Disowning Knowledge in Seven Plays of Shakespeare* (Cambridge University Press, 1987).

13. A. C. Bradley, "Hegel's Theory of Tragedy" and "The Rejection of Falstaff" in *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), 69–95 and 247–75, respectively.

14. Otto Pöggeler, "Hegel und die griechische Tragödie" in *Heidelberger Hegel-Tage, Hegel-Studien Beiheft* 1.1964: 285–305.

15. Henry Paolucci and Anne Paolucci, *Hegel on Tragedy* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1962).

16. Anne Paolucci, "Hegel's Theory of Comedy" in *Comedy: New Perspectives*, edited by Maurice Charney (New York: New Literary Forum, 1978), 89–108.

17. Henry Paolucci, "The Poetics of Aristotle and Hegel" in *Hegel in comparative Literature*, ed. Frederick G. Weiss, *Review of National Literatures*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (New York: St. John's University Press, 1970), 201–9.

18. Henry Paolucci and Anne Paolucci, *Hegelian Literary Perspectives* (Smyrna: Griffon House, 2002).

19. Ursula Franke and Karsten Berr, *Kulturpolitik und Kunstgeschichte: Perspektiven der Hegelschen Ästhetik* (Meiner Felix Verlag GmbH, 2005).

20. Walter Jaeschke, *Hegel-Handbuch: Leben, Werk, Wirkung* (J. B. Metzler Verlag, 2003).
21. Maria Salditt, *Hegels Shakespeare-Interpretation*. Philosophische Forschungen (Berlin: Springer, 1927).
22. Emil Wolf, "Hegel und Shakespeare" in *Vom Geist der Der Dichtung; Gedächtnisschrift für Robert Pesch* (Hrsg Martin, Fritz, Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1949).
23. Anne Paolucci, "Bradley and Hegel on Shakespeare" in *Comparative Literature* 16, 3 (Summer 1964), 211–225.
24. Claus Uhlig, "Shakespeare Between Antiquity and Modernity. A theme of Aesthetics in Hegel and Cohen" in *Zeitschrift für englische Philologie*, 122, 1 (October 2004), 24–43.
25. Andrew Cutrofello, "Kant's Debate with Herder about the Philosophical Significance of the Genius of Shakespeare" in *Philosophical Compass* (www.blackwell-compass.com, Nov. 2007); and *Imagining Otherwise: Metapsychology and the Analytic A Posteriori* (Northwestern Studies in Phenomenology and Existentialism, Northwestern University Press, 1997).
26. Sara MacDonald, *Finding Freedom: Hegel's Philosophy and the Emancipation of Women* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008).
27. Jeffrey Reid, "The Fiery Crucible, Yorick's Skull and Leprosy in the Sky: Hegel and the Otherness of Nature" in *Idealistic Studies*, 34, 1 (Summer 2004), 99–115.
28. Speight, Allen, *Hegel, Literature and the Problem of Agency* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
29. He concludes that "Hegel looked to three literary genres—tragedy, comedy, and the romantic novel—as offering privileged access to three moments of human agency: retrospectivity, or the fact that human action receives its full meaning only after the event; theatricality, or the fact that human action receives its full meaning only in a social context; and forgiveness, or the practice of reassessing human action in the light of its essentially interpretive nature" (book cover).

Notes to Introduction

1. Hegel, *Aesth.* p. 1173.
2. Ibid. p. 52, note 1.
3. Mark Johnson, *Moral Imagination: Implications of Cognitive Science for Ethics*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993. Hereafter *MI*.
4. *MI* p. 10.
5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. Jennifer A. Bates, *Hegel's Theory of Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004).

8. "In both instances, we move from a map that is subjective to one that can be used to show others. Pointing to a line between two points in the sand provides a symbol, but not one that adequately conveys what we mean. If we repeat instances of the symbol in many contexts, we gather that symbol up into a new universal, the sign. Then the line, instead of symbolizing something incommunicable, signifies travel. The sign as convention is a result of a repetition of the work of the symbolic imagination, and a raising of what is recollected in that symbolic activity to a new universal, the sign. If we remained at the level of symbol-making imagination, we would have a production of a symbol that is both too determinate and not determinate enough because it is without context. We make the transition to a sign by repeatedly traversing the imagination's work and reproducing that pathway as itself a form that is conventionally determinate in a meaning system" (*Hegel's Theory of Imagination* p. 92).

9. Hegel, "The Relationship of Scepticism to Philosophy" (1802), translation and notes by H. S. Harris, in *Between Kant and Hegel: Texts in the Development of Post-Kantian Idealism*, Translated and Annotated by George Di Giovanni and H. S. Harris (Albany: SUNY Press, 1985), (311–62) p. 354.

10. *PoR* par. 135, in both Remark and Addition, p. 89–90.

11. *PoS* par. 617, p. 374. See Hegel's discussion of the Moral World View in the *PoS* par. 599, p. 365.

12. See *PoR* par. 139–40, Knox pp. 92–103.

13. Wood, Allen, *Hegel's Ethical Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 17–35. Hereafter *HET*.

14. *HET* p. 31–32.

15. "The starting point of a self-actualization theory is a certain concept of what human beings *are*—a concept that cannot ultimately be divorced from the practical self-concern that belongs necessarily to being a self. Hegel sees this as the point of the classical injunction *Gnothi seauton* ("Know thyself"). . . . In seeking the knowledge demanded by this injunction it is bound to be inappropriate to try to draw any ultimate distinction between "facts" and "values," or between theoretical and practical rationality" (*HET* p. 31–32).

16. *HET* p. 31–32. Wood concludes that "the 'practical spirit' or 'will' . . . includes the theoretical, because the basis of theoretical concern is practical concern, concern with what I am and am to be (*PR* par 4A). And the outcome of this concern is the awareness that what I am is freedom, that is, a being whose vocation is to know itself and actualize its knowledge of itself (*EG* par. 481)" (*HET* p. 31–32).

17. *Aesth.* p. 1227–28.

18. *Aesth.* p. 420.

19. *Aesth.* pp. 418–19. Of the character that is already fully cognizant of their fate and grief Hegel writes that he uses simile and comparison “to free himself from this immediate unity and make the liberation actual and obvious by showing that he is still capable of making similes.” Among Hegel’s examples are Queen Katherine in *Henry VIII*: “like the lily, / That once was mistress of the field and flourish’d, / I’ll hang my head and perish” (*Aesth.* p. 419).

20. *Macbeth*, 5.5, 22–27, p. 2613 cited in *Aesth.* p. 420.

21. “What the Shakespearean figures carry out, their particular ends, has its origin and the root of its force in their own individuality. But in one and the same individuality they preserve at the same time the loftiness which wipes away what they really are, i.e. in their aims, interests, and actions; it aggrandizes them and enhances them above themselves. . . . [Though some characters, like Falstaff] remain sunk in their vulgarity, . . . at the same time they are shown to be men of intelligence with a genius fit for anything, enabling them to have an entirely free existence, and, in short, to be what great men are. . . . In Shakespeare we find no justification, no condemnation, but only an observation of the universal fate; individuals view its necessity without complaint or repentance, and from that standpoint they see everything perish, themselves included, as if they saw it all happening outside themselves” (*Aesth.* p. 586).

22. *Aesth.* p. 610.

23. *Ibid.*

24. *Aesth.* pp. 610–11.

25. See Behler’s “The Theory of the Imagination” in his *German Romantic Literary Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 1993, pp. 74–87. Henceforth Behler. I have shown why Hegel despised the Romantics for their unsystematic, unhistorical view of the imagination (see *Hegel’s Theory of Imagination*, pp. 128–33).

26. Behler, p. 83.

27. See Jeffrey Reid’s *L’anti-romantique, Hegel contre le romantisme ironique* (Québec: Presses de l’université Laval, 2007).

28. Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare*, (London: Norton, 2004), pp. 40 and 41.

29. *Aesth.* p. 421. Hegel cites Cleopatra placing the deadly asp to her breast in *Anthony and Cleopatra* Act V scene ii she says: “Peace, peace! / Dost thou not see my baby at my breast, / That sucks the nurse asleep? . . . / As sweet as balm, as soft as air, as gentle” (*Aesth.* p. 420–21); Hegel remarks that “[t]he bite of the snake relaxes her limbs so softly that death itself is deceived and regards itself as sleep.” He adds that “[t]his image can itself be counted as an image for the gentle and tranquillizing nature of these comparisons” (*Aesth.* p. 421). But the main purpose of the comparisons is not to create an alternate reality. It is rather to harmonize the individual with the one he or she is experiencing. In the case of Cleopatra, there was nothing left for her practical will

to figure out. The best way to deal with the death that was slipping over her was to imagine to herself that it was easeful sleep.

30. “[I]n classical art . . . human individuality has not pressed on to the extreme of inwardness at which the subject draws the decision for his action purely from within himself. What we call ‘conscience’ in our sense of the word has not yet found its place here” (*Aesth.* p. 458).

31. *Aesth.* p. 1230.

32. Once again, Hegel uses Shakespeare as his example, and he directly connects it to the characters’ imagination: “we must . . . come to see in [these modern characters] that this restrictedness of their personality is itself only a fate, i.e. an entanglement of their peculiar restricted character with a deeper inner life. Now this depth and this wealth of spirit Shakespeare does in fact let us find in them. He exhibits them as men of free imaginative power and gifted spirit, since their reflection rises above and lifts them above what they are in their situation and specific ends, so that, as it were, it is only through the ill-luck of the circumstances, through the collision involved in their own situation, that they are impelled on to what they accomplish (*Aesth.* p. 585).

33. *Aesth.* pp. 51–55.

34. *Aesth.* pp. 51 and 52.

35. *Ibid.* p. 51 and p. 55.

36. *Ibid.*

37. *Ibid.* p. 53.

38. *Ibid.* p. 54.

39. *Ibid.* p. 54–55.

40. *Ibid.* p. 55.

41. It is important to keep in mind the two different uses of *Sittlichkeit* in Hegel’s work: In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, *Sittlichkeit* is ethical substance that is immediate belief in the view one holds. Hegel’s example is Antigone’s belief that she must bury her brother, and Creon’s belief that the rule of the State is what must be followed even if it runs contrary to the rules of family, such as burial. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, morality—the autonomous, rational agent who decides categorically on the basis of reason what ought to be done—is a much later development than this immediate *Sittlichkeit*. *Sittlichkeit* (or ‘Ethical Life’) in that work must be distinguished from Ethical Life in the *Philosophy of Right*. In the *Philosophy of Right*, *Sittlichkeit* is not immediate. It is the final developmental moment of right. It therefore comes *after* morality. In my discussion here, I am keeping mostly to this second distinction (that in the *Philosophy of Right*).

42. In the following discussion, I use *Moralität* and morality interchangeably since the latter is, in this discussion, simply the translation of Hegel’s original German word.

43. *PoR* par. 104.

44. Ibid. Remark to par. 135, p. 90.

45. Ethical Life as understood in the *Philosophy of Right*. See my note 41 above.

46. Hegel writes against Kant:

If it is already established on other grounds and presupposed that property and human life are to exist and be respected, then indeed it is a contradiction to commit theft or murder; a contradiction must be a contradiction of something, i.e. of some content presupposed from the start as a fixed principle. It is to a principle of that kind alone, therefore, that an action can be related either by correspondence or contradiction. But if duty is to be willed simply for duty's sake and not for the sake of some content, it is only a formal identity whose nature it is to exclude all content and specification (*PoR* Remark to par. 135, p. 90).

47. I discuss this in depth in Chapter 8.

48. Contrary to some scholars' belief, Hegel was not an apologist for Prussian reactionaries. See Jacques D'Hondt's *Hegel in his Time: Berlin, 1818–1831*, translated by John Burbidge, with Nelson Roland and Judith Levasseur (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 1988).

49. See, for example, my Chapter 9: I show that, if we keep to Hegel's reading of *Macbeth*, then there are difficulties keeping to Hegel's description of conscience and its role in the distinction between morality and ethical life.

50. Following an interesting discussion with Tom Rockmore (Duquesne University), I considered calling this book *Hegel and Shakespeare on Ethical Imagination*. But that would not have saved me the labour of making these points. And again, since the term moral imagination is used in other works with which I agree (for example, Johnson's *Moral Imagination*), it seemed best to keep my title as is and to add here the clarifications I have just made regarding Hegel's distinction.

51. This section summarizes essential points from *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature in 18 Volumes* 1907–21, Volume V. The Drama to 1642, Part One. XII "Shakespeare on the Continent," Chapters 9–23. Henceforth (*Cambridge History*, Chapter **). I have inserted footnotes only when there is a change of chapters or when it would otherwise be unclear who is being cited. My use of this Cambridge text no doubt repeats some biases of the Cambridge authors. My intention is simply to hit upon the main actors in the history of this reception for the benefit of general readers; it is not designed as a contribution to the scholarship on Shakespeare on the

Continent. For a “detailed revision of many cherished clichés about German Shakespeare reception” see Roger Paulin’s 500-hundred page work *The Critical Reception of Shakespeare in Germany 1682–1914: Native Literature and Foreign Genius* (Hildesheim, Zurich, and New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 2003); see also the Book Review of it in the *Shakespeare Quarterly* 56.4 (2005) 489–91 by Andreas Höfele, Professor of English Literature at the University of Munich, president of the German Shakespeare Society.

52. *Cambridge History*, Chapter 9.

53. *Ibid.*

54. *Cambridge History*, Chapter 16.

55. *Ibid.*

56. *Ibid.*

57. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Briefe, die neueste Literatur betreffend*, number 17, cited in *Cambridge History*, Chapter 16.

58. *Cambridge History*, Chapter 16.

59. *Ibid.* Chapter 17.

60. *Ibid.* Chapter 18.

61. See note 94 below.

62. *Ibid.* Chapter 19.

63. *Ibid.* Chapter 20.

64. *Ibid.*

65. *Ibid.* Chapter 21. See also Andrew Cutrofello, “Kant’s Debate with Herder about the Philosophical Significance of the Genius of Shakespeare” in *Philosophical Compass* (www.blackwell-compass.com, Nov. 2007).

66. *Ibid.* Chapter 22.

67. Ludwig Tieck and his daughter Dorothea carried on Schlegel’s translation; in 1818–29, a complete Shakespeare in nine volumes was published by Johann Heinrich Voss and his sons, another by Paul Heyse and others in 1867 (*ibid.*).

68. It had a profound influence on the theory of drama in France, Italy, and Spain, and in England, it influenced Coleridge (*ibid.*).

69. *Ibid.* Chapter 23.

70. *Ibid.*

71. As I indicate in my Preface, there are a number of scholarly works that deal with this topic in detail. My book is a series of exercises in moral imagination using Hegelian philosophy and Shakespearean drama, so an in-depth scholarly analysis of Hegel’s reception of Shakespeare is not needed. However, to make sense of some of the claims in the chapters, it is useful to add here a general overview of Hegel’s philosophy of art and Shakespeare’s role in it.

72. These lectures are compiled from Hegel’s notes and his students’ notes from his lectures. It is not possible to know with any greater exactitude what Hegel’s views were. See Martin Donougho’s many works on the Hegel’s

Aesthetics, including “Art and Absolute Spirit, Or, The Anatomy of Aesthetics” in *Revue de l’Université d’Ottawa*, Vol. 52, October-December 1982, 483–98.

73. *Aesth.* p. 611.

74. For a longer summary of the *Aesthetics*, see Chapter 6 of my *Hegel’s Theory of Imagination*, pp. 113.

75. It is important to distinguish Hegel’s Romantic art form from the German Romantic theory of art. These are very different beasts. For a discussion of this, see pp. 124–33 of *Hegel’s Theory of Imagination*.

76. *Hamlet*, 1.2. 76, p. 1674.

77. Gary Shapiro, “Hegel’s Dialectic of Artistic Meaning” in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 35, Issue 1 (Autumn, 1976) 23–35, p. 31.

78. *Aesth.* p. 1235–36.

79. *Aesth.* p. 1236.

80. Elsewhere in the *Aesthetics*, Hegel indicates that Shakespeare’s drama is “past,” (*Aesth.* p. 608), claiming Goethe to be the most developed artist of Hegel’s time (*Aesth.* p. 610). This generates some ambiguity about Shakespeare’s complete supremacy according to Hegel. But given the amount of art over history that falls short of Shakespeare, Shakespeare’s status within Hegel’s scheme is little altered by this ambiguity.

81. Hegel’s references to Shakespeare occasionally appear in other works (for example, the *Philosophy of Mind*). The most sustained discussions of Shakespeare occur in the *Aesthetics*. I take up many of those discussions in my chapters. The following overview is designed to be less than those in-depth analyses and yet more than what a glance at the Index of the *Aesthetics* can provide.

82. *Aesth.* p. 204 (collision) and p. 217 (action). These sections are in the first section (the “Determinacy of the Ideal”) of “The Beauty of Art or the Ideal,” in *Aesth.* p. 174ff.

83. *Aesth.* p. 418ff.

84. *Aesth.* pp. 573–611.

85. *Aesth.* pp. 1164–65.

86. “[E]very part of the whole thing must be closed and finished off. For example in *Hamlet*. . . . Similarly in *Romeo and Juliet*. . . .” (*Aesth.* p. 1167).

87. *Aesth.* p. 1172.

88. Hegel writes that

Shakespeare’s tragedies and comedies have attracted a larger and larger public because in them what preponderates by far, despite all purely national interests, is the universal interests of mankind. Consequently he has failed to find an entry only where national artistic conventions are of such a narrow and special kind that they altogether exclude, or at least diminish, the enjoyment of his works (*Aesth.* p. 1176).

In these discussions about the three unities and national interest, Hegel clearly has the French in mind as the foil. When he discusses dramatic character development, Hegel asserts this foil outright: "Amongst the modern dramatists it is Shakespeare and Goethe above all who have put before us characters most full of life, whereas the French . . . have evidently been content with formal and abstract representatives of general types and passions rather than with truly living individuals" (*Aesth.* p. 1178).

89. *Aesth.* p. 1225.

90. *Aesth.* p. 1233.

91. *Aesth.* p. 1236.

92. *Aesth.* p. 188.

93. "Shakespeare's Schauspiele zum Geschenk' Welche Shakespeare-Ausgabe Besaß Hegel?" in *Auf Hegels Spuren: Beiträge zur Hegel-forschung* Friedhelm Nicolin, Lucia Sziborsky and Helmut Schneider (Meiner Verlag, 1996), s. 27–35, p. 27.

94. Ibid. That this was the edition Hegel used was confirmed by the current Director of the Hegel-Archiv in Bochum, Germany, Professor Jaeschke. Eschenburg revised Wieland's prose translations, and is viewed by some to be the "first great German Shakespeare scholar" who left nothing significant about Shakespeare unrecorded (Paulin p. 37 and 120, cited in Höfele, see my note 51 above).

95. Terry Pinkard, *Hegel: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 5.

96. We ought not to be fooled simply by the fact that in the Surkamp German edition of *Aesthetics*, Hegel cites Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in English. (In later passages in the Surkamp, the Shakespeare passages appear in Schlegel's translation without the English.) See *Ästhetik* s. 300–301; *Aesth.* p. 231.

97. Pinkard, *Hegel, A Bibliography*, p. 551.

98. I am grateful to Ian McHugh and John Harvey for their efforts in finding these substantiations of Pinkard's claim.

99. Hegel, in *Briefe von und an Hegel*, Band 3: 1823–1831 letter 466 p. 35, in *Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel Sämtliche Werke*, Band XXVII–XXX (Hamburg: Verlag von Felix Meiner, 1954). Of lesser interest is the fact that, in Hegel's school *Stambuch*, a fellow student wrote him a passage in English from Shakespeare. "Hegels Stambuch" in Hegel, *Briefe IV*, heraus. von Johannes Hoffmeister, Band 4 heraus. von Rolf Flehsig, (Hamburg: Verlag von Felix Meiner 1960) entry number 58 by M. Seiz, p. 57.

100. "... denn ich las Wort für Wort im Buchelchen nach." Hegel, *Briefe III*, letter 562 p. 192. In the letters, Hegel mentions that he saw *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet*. Of Hegel's dislike for the Shakespearean troop in Paris, Pinkard writes:

He was certainly not impressed with British methods of acting; they seemed too melodramatic—involving too much “growling” and “grimacing,” as he put it—to be enjoyable; Hegel also remarked that it was “amazing how they [the British] botch Shakespeare,” a common sentiment among the Romantic Germans and interesting for the fact that Hegel expressed it in that context; after all, only one year later he was chiding Ludwig Tieck in print for expressing very much that same view—“the English, one would think, understand their Shakespeare; they would at the least severely ridicule the petit bourgeois narrow-minded obscurity of the continent if we were . . . to elevate our studies above their esteem for their poet (Pinkard, *Hegel* p. 551–52).

McHugh suggests that Paul Schlick’s description of nineteenth-century English stage craft might enlighten us: The actors would use “highly artificial style, and the artifice was insisted upon, to allow the conventions to work. Those conventions included spectacle, song, dance, acrobatics, and a wide range of performing arts which we today associate more with the circus, but which in Dickens’ day were readily adapted for the stage.” (See Schlick, “Introduction” to Dickens’ *Nicholas Nickleby*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. xxii–xxiii.) Since stage-craft is not our concern in this book, I leave this for the historians to clarify.

Notes to Chapter 1

1. A short version of this chapter was presented to the Ontario Hegel Organization, University of Guelph, April 13, 2003. I would like to thank the organizer of that conference, Dr. Jay Lampert, for inviting me to present it, and the conference attendees for their helpful responses to it.

2. Preface, *PoS* par. 2, p. 2.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. *PoS* p. 492, par. 807.
6. Preface, *PoS* par. 29, p. 17, my additional italics.
7. *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, 3.2. 114, p. 837.
8. *Aesth.* p. 1168.
9. *Aesth.* p. 1166.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. *Aesth.* p. 1166–67.

13. *Aesth.* p. 1223.
14. *Aesth.* p. 1229.
15. *Aesth.* p. 1173.
16. *Aesth.* p. 1188.
17. *Aesth.* p. 1227–28, my italics.
18. *PoS* par. 53, p. 32.
19. *Aesth.* p. 1163, my italics.

20. For an account of moral luck that focuses on Hegel's account of tragedy in relation to Aristotle's and to current theories of tragedy, see Speight's chapter on "From Moral Luck to Expressive Agency: the Origins of an Hegelian 'Poetics' of Agency" in *Hegel, Literature and the Problem of Agency* (Cambridge University Press, 2001) pp. 46–50.

21. For a discussion of luck in Hegel generally, see See Henrich's "Hegel's Theorie über den Zufall" in *Hegel im Kontext* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1967), s. 157–86.

22. *Hamlet*, 2.2. line 473ff, p. 1701, cited in E. M. W. Tillyard's *The Elizabethan World Picture* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Book Ltd. 1943), p. 60.

23. I argue later that this gives the whole book the character of a Romance (in the Shakespearean sense).

24. The following discussion of different orders of negation is not from Hegel. But it draws upon Hegel's notion of negation and negation of negation and in this sense is informed by Hegel.

25. *Othello*, 1.1. line 65, p. 2102.

26. *Lear*, 2.3. line 21, p. 2506.

27. I discuss this second-order negation below. In my Chapter 4, I discuss the character of *Lear* in depth.

28. *Lear*, 1.2. 109–21, p. 2488. I am using the Conflated Text version throughout.

29. *Lear*, 5.3. 172–73, p. 2549.

30. For an insightful discussion of Iago's entanglement in a tripartite logic of jealousy, see Neil MacGregor's unpublished paper "A Hegelian Account of Othello," presented at the International Association of Philosophy and Literature, University of Syracuse, May 2004.

31. I thank Emilia Angelova and John Burbidge (Trent University, Canada) who, following my presentation at the Ontario Hegel Organization Conference, suggested Rosalind as a case of second-order negation and pointed out this irony.

32. See for example her description of women's wit not being able to be contained (*As You Like It*, 4.1. 137, p. 1641).

33. See my Part II (in which I look at Shakespeare's History plays), especially Chapter 10, in which I discuss the transition from the tragedy of ethical life to the possibility of an absolute standpoint. Discussions in Part II

involve the concept of the good in the terms of the *Philosophy of Right* as well as in terms of community developments in self-interpretation (i.e., the development of Spirit); the good is discussed in relation to power, virtue, conscience, evil, and hypocrisy.

34. Of course, this is only true of Cordelia at the start of the play. She becomes more involved later on in the play. I discuss Cordelia in depth in my Chapter 4.

35. *Hamlet*, 1.2. 89–90; 97–106, p. 1675.

36. *Hamlet*, 2.2. lines 145–51, p. 1694.

37. *Othello*, 3.4. lines 52–72, p. 2143.

38. *Aesth.* p. 1199–1200.

39. *Aesthetics*, p. 67–68.

40. *As You Like It*, 4.1. 21–22, p. 1639.

41. *As You Like It*, 2.7. 139, p. 1622.

42. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 3.1. 15–19, p. 831.

43. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 3.1. 31–40, p. 831.

44. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 5.1. 154, p. 854.

45. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 5.1. 235–36 and 247–49, p. 856.

46. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 5.1. 182, p. 855.

Notes to Chapter 2

1. A shorter version of this paper was presented at the International Association of Philosophy and Literature Conference in Syracuse, 2004.

2. See my brief discussion of it in my Preface, p. xvii.

3. See my Introduction, p. 10–11, for a description of Ethical Substance. Note that here we are using Hegel's account of Ethical Substance in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (not that of Ethical Life in his *Philosophy of Right*).

4. Sophocles, *Antigone*, in *The Complete Plays of Sophocles*, translated by Sir Richard Claverhouse Jebb, edited by Moses Hadas, New York: Bantam Books, 1967.

5. Judith Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death* New York: Columbia University Press, 2000. Henceforth Butler's *Antigone's Claim*). For a different discussion of performativity in Hegel, see Martin Donougho's "Hegel's Pragmatics of Tragedy," in *Idealistic Studies*, 2006, vol. 36 issue 3, pp. 53–168).

6. Hegel may not have known about the play *Coriolanus*: He does not refer to the character or to the play in the *Aesthetics*, or, to my knowledge, anywhere else.

7. Hegel does not discuss Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* in the *Aesthetics*. In an early work, however, Hegel does mention the historical *Coriolanus*:

Who does not admire Coriolanus who, at the apex of his good fortune, was mindful of Nemesis, and asked the gods (much as Gustavus Adolphus humbled himself before God during the battle of Luetzen) not to glorify the spirit of Roman greatness but rather to make him more humble?

This citation is from Hegel's essay "Religion is One of Our Greatest Concerns of Life" (1793) in *G. W. F. Hegel: Theologian of the Spirit*, edited by Peter C. Hodgson, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997, p. 46. I thank Ian Patrick McHugh for pointing out this reference.

8. See Aufidius' speech to the banished Coriolanus (4.5. 100–46, p. 2848–49).

9. *Coriolanus*, 2.3. lines 6–7, p. 2821.

10. Roman legalism is not the end of Spirit's political development, only the end of Ethical Substance. At this point I can address an objection to my idea that Hegel should have used Coriolanus to exemplify specifically the Kinship-State problems inherent to Ethical Substance. The objection is that, in *Coriolanus*, we are in Rome; according to Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, we must therefore deal with "Legal Status" (Roman legalism), not with Ethical Substance (for according to Hegel, Rome is the home of the multitude of individual atoms—civilians—who are not governed by the immediacy of Ethical Spirit). My reply is that this does not pose a problem for us. The aspect I am drawing on in *Coriolanus* is not Roman legalism but rather the relationship of Coriolanus as a sexual, desiring member of a family to Coriolanus as man of the State. In other words, I am drawing on Divine vs. Human Law. This is neither impossible nor an anachronism since every moment in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is interpretable in an a-historical way, each moment being a phenomenological dialectical form. (For an argument supporting the a-historical nature of phenomenological moments, see John Burbidge's "Man, God, and Death in Hegel's *Phenomenology*," in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, VXLII, No. 2 (December 1981).) Furthermore, Kinship-State problems do not disappear in higher forms of political organization: they just may not form the foundation of that organization the way they do in (Hegel's reading of) the Greek City-State. This last point raises another objection against the use of Coriolanus: The society and not just the individual must be transformed in this development of Spirit, and there is no evidence in the play that Rome is transformed, whereas we know that the Greek City-States are conquered by Rome. In other words, according to Hegel's reading of the demise of Ethical Substance, it is a demise of a kind of social fabric that we are not entitled to confine within a single individual. My reply is that I am not confining the social to the person of Coriolanus: he *is* the social fabric and he is the collisions and tears in that social fabric; furthermore, his community is therefore as much

the falling fabric in the way he is, for he is their fabrication. Whether there is a *dialectical* development of Rome following Coriolanus' death is something historians must decide (just as they must decide whether Hegel is right to claim that there is a *dialectical* development from Greek City-State to Roman Legalism). There is nothing in Sophocles' play that tells us what dialectical developments will arise out of the demise of the Greek City-State any more than there is something in Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* that tells us what dialectical developments will arise out of Coriolanus' death. I am not trying to answer those questions here: I am looking at two human beings who are fabrications of the society in which they live and who are also the site of the collisions of Divine and Human Laws, persons in whom Ethical Substance as a form of social life comes to naught.

11. Seyla Benhabib, "On Hegel, Women, and Irony" in *Feminist Interpretations of G. W. F. Hegel* (edited by Patricia Jagentowicz Mills, University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996) p. 41.

12. *Antigone's Claim*, p. 37. There is a lot of scholarship on Hegel's use of Antigone in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. See Benhabib's and other authors in *Feminist Interpretations*; also Martin Donougho "The Woman in White: on the Reception of Hegel's Antigone" *Owl of Minerva* (Vol. 21 No. 1, Fall 1989) and especially the edition devoted to "Feminism and Hegel's Antigone Revisited" (*Owl of Minerva*, Vol. 33. No. 2, Spring/Summer 2002; the "Message from the Editor" there cites earlier articles in the *Owl* on this topic). Two camps can be demarcated (though this does not exhaust the literature). Some assert that despite Hegel's historically embedded patriarchal ideas, his dialectical philosophy of difference in identity has within it the means for transcending patriarchal structures or any other socially enslaving one, including patriarchal ones; others believe that Hegel's antagonisms toward women cannot be overcome within his philosophy. I count myself largely of the former camp, though I agree with Seyla Benhabib that Hegel's account of woman as the eternal irony of the community is problematic, particularly his failure to recognize and celebrate women German Romantics and their emancipation through the work of irony (see Benhabib, "On Hegel, Women, and Irony" pp. 35–41). Some of the debate also concerns whether woman plays the role of slave in a master-slave dialectic, one in which the slave eventually sublates the master (see Philip Kain's article in the *Owl* Vol. 33, No. 2 and Mary O'Brian's article in *Feminist Interpretations*, among others). I am reluctant to grant this reading since Hegel does not seem to be privileging Antigone over Creon in his account of Ethical Spirit: In Hegel's account, both bring the downfall of Ethical Spirit and there is no sign in Hegel's text that any new form of individuality springs specifically from her action alone. My argument here is quite different from either camp: I am claiming, with Butler, that Antigone does bring something to Spirit but not what Hegel wants at this stage; therefore Antigone is not the figure he should be using. In choosing a

male figure instead, I necessarily disagree with Hegel's view about gender in relation to the Divine and Human Laws (see below for my argument). Finally, I argue elsewhere that in Hegel, "failed burials," "eternal irony," and "woman" each play an essential role in the resurrection of Spirit (that is, in getting the dialectic right, particularly when rereading the *Phenomenology of Spirit*) (see my unpublished article "The Dead Burying the Dead versus Dialectical Resurrection in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*").

13. *Antigone's Claim*, p. 24.

14. Ibid.

15. *Antigone's Claim*, op cit.

16. I show below that this has to do with her not forgetting the name of death: She is embracing death (and its name) self-consciously.

17. "Kinship is not simply a situation she is in but a set of practices that she also performs, relations that are reinstituted in time precisely through the practice of their repetition. . . . [H]er action [of burial] is the action of kinship, the performative repetition that reinstates kinship as a public scandal" (*Antigone's Claim*, p. 57–58).

18. Hegel certainly paints gender as essential to the dialectic. See *PoS* paragraphs 456–63, especially the end of 463, p. 278; see also par. 465, p. 280 (end) and par. 475, p. 288; the connection of sisterhood to Penates happens at par. 457.

19. Ironically, by doing that, he "forgets the name of death." As we will see, this means that he alienates himself from the Divine Law's connection to the Human Law.

20. *PoS* par. 466, p. 280.

21. Transferring the identity of woman with the Divine Law onto a male body is of course only one kind of sexual complexity. Men can also represent the Divine Law just as women can also represent the Human Law. The implicit identification of male with State and female with Divine Law is not a rule. But this is the way the identification works in *Coriolanus*.

22. *Coriolanus*, 2.3. 48 and 57–58, p. 2822.

23. *Coriolanus*, 2.3. 103–7, p. 2823.

24. *Coriolanus*, 2.3. 70–73, p. 2823.

25. *PoS* par. 465, p. 279.

26. *PoS* par. 466, p. 280.

27. Ibid.

28. *Coriolanus*, 1.1. 85ff, p. 2795

29. *Coriolanus*, 1.1. 104–8, p. 2795.

30. Ibid. lines 97–98.

31. The BBC production of the death of *Coriolanus* at the hands of Aufidius expresses the resolution as an act of desire, the piercing of *Coriolanus* by the sword as a penetration.

32. *Coriolanus*, 3.1. 23, p. 2827; see also tongues/teeth/mouth at 3.1. 35–37, p. 2827.

33. *Coriolanus*, 3.1. 240, p. 2832.

34. *Coriolanus*, 2.3. 6–7, p. 2821. The roman who acts as a spy for the Volsces is recognized in terms of the body and tongue (4.3. 7–8, p. 2845). There are a large number of references to body parts performing the function of judgement (e.g., “has the porter his eyes in his head, that he gives entrance to such companions?” *Coriolanus* 4.5. 13, p. 2847).

35. *Coriolanus*, 3.1. 255ff, p. 2833, my italics.

36. *Coriolanus*, 3.2. 53–58, p. 2836.

37. *Coriolanus*, 3.2. 110–14, p. 2837–38.

38. See *Aesth.* p. 64ff.

39. *PoS* par. 455, p. 273. In addition, the community can exact the penalty of banishment or death against anyone who disrespects or threatens the fabric of society.

40. *Ibid.*, par. 455, p. 273.

41. *Coriolanus*, 3.1. ff p. 2827ff.

42. *Coriolanus*, 3.1. 70, p. 2827.

43. *Coriolanus*, 3.1. 142, p. 2830.

44. *Coriolanus*, 3.1. 255ff, p. 2833.

45. *Coriolanus*, 3.1. 159, p. 2830.

46. *Coriolanus*, 1.10. 81–91, p. 2810.

47. *PoS* par. 461, p. 277.

48. *Coriolanus*, 3.3. 124–27, p. 2841.

49. *PoS* par 475, p. 288.

50. *Ibid.* p. 289.

51. *Ibid.*

52. *Coriolanus*, 3.1. 1–20, p. 2827.

53. *Coriolanus*, 3.1. 244–46, p. 2833.

54. *Coriolanus*, 1.1. 104–8, p. 2795 (body) and 3.1, 244–46, p. 2833 (building).

55. *Antigone's Claim*, p. 82.

56. *Antigone's Claim*, p. 58.

57. *Ibid.*

58. *Ibid.* p. 82.

59. *PoS* par. 470, p. 284.

60. Hegel writes that at the downfall of both sides of Ethical Substance, Destiny steps on the scene (*PoS* par 472, p. 285). Destiny steps on the scene more in *Coriolanus*' case than in *Antigone*'s: Her Destiny was always known to her; he only fully grasps his when he gives into his mother and realizes his fate.

61. Sophocle's *Antigone*, p. 127.

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid. p. 133.

Notes to Chapter 3

1. A shorter version of this paper was presented on the panel on “Inference and Intuition in Philosophy and Literature/Inférence et Intuition Dans la Philosophie et la Littérature” at the Canadian Philosophical Association Congress Meeting, Winnipeg, May 29, 2004.

2. *PoS* par. 36, p. 21 my italics, *PdG* par. 36, p. 35.

3. Ibid.

4. Hegel, *Psychology*, in the *Encyclopaedia Philosophy of Mind* (*Enc.Phil.Mind.Psy.*).

5. With regard to Hamlet himself (as well as Hegel’s Absolute Knowing), at the end of this chapter the issue nonetheless remains a question. To answer it more completely (in the light of Hegel and Shakespeare), throughout the rest of the book I develop the concept of negation in relation to a number of other concepts (such as wonder, which is the urge to overcome alienation) and in relation to various attempts by sovereign subjects to “redeem time.” A conclusion regarding ghosts and *Geist* is therefore to be found in Chapter 12. There, I also briefly show how this relates to Derrida’s notion of *hauntology* (Chapter 12 note 84). Paul Kottman provides an interesting and different discussion of *Hamlet*, Hegel and death in “Disinheriting the Globe: On Hamlet’s Fate” (in *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* (1–2009/Volume 63 no. 247) 7–40). Among other insightful investigations, Kottman compares how Hamlet’s mother, uncle, and community in general view and treat the death of individuals, with Hamlet’s concern over his dead father, and with how Hamlet treats the body of Polonius. (My arguments below in this chapter, however, lead me to disagree with Kottman’s claim, p. 30–31, that Hamlet’s actions at Ophelia’s burial are only a show of honor.) See above p. 80 (at note 67).

6. *Enc.Phil.Mind.Psy.* “Psychology,” par. 445, Zusatz p. 192.

7. Ibid.

8. For a discussion of Hegel’s various descriptions of these moments see my *Hegel’s Theory of Imagination*.

9. *Enc.Phil.Mind.Psy.* par. 451, p. 201–2.

10. It is “intelligence that comprehends the concrete universal nature of objects, or thought in the specific sense that what we think also is, also has objectivity” (ibid).

11. See the Preface to the *PoS* par. 32, p. 19.

12. *Enc.Phil.Mind.Psy.* par. 468, p. 227.

13. Ibid. par. 468, Z p. 228.

14. Ibid. par. 451, Zusatz p. 202.

15. Ibid. par. 465, Zusatz p. 224.
16. Ibid.
17. Kant, "What is Orientation in Thinking" in *Kant: Political Writings*, Second Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 237–49.
18. *Enc.Phil.Mind.Psy.* par. 465, Zusatz p. 224.
19. Ibid. par. 466, p. 225
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid. par. 467, Z p. 226.
22. Ibid. par. 466, p. 225.
23. Ibid. par. 467, Z pp. 226–27.
24. Ibid. par. 467, p. 225.
25. Hegel's critique of Kantian noumena is similar to this. *Sc. of Logic*, p. 61–63.
26. *Enc.Mind* par. 467, p. 225.
27. Ibid. par. 467 p. 227.
28. Ibid. par. 468, Z p. 228.
29. *Enc.Phil.Mind.Psy.* par 467, Z p. 227.
30. This is argued for in detail in my *Hegel's Theory of Imagination*.
31. See Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, second edition, trans. T. Irwin, (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1999), p. 103, BK 1147a15.
32. One could argue that, in Hegel's *Logic*, inferential cognition is the syllogism (see "The Syllogism" p. 664–65). But "The Syllogism" presupposes that cognition has already accomplished the task of phenomenological comprehension; in the syllogism, reason has risen above the finite and is now, after the fact(s), "pregnant with [its] content" (ibid. 665). Our concern with inferential cognition as moral imagination, by contrast, concerns the birthing of *phenomenological* comprehension of actual content (rather than the *logical* comprehension that is pregnant with its moments as potentialities).
33. For the movement from religious picture-thinking to comprehensive knowing of Absolute Knowing, see *PoS* par. 796–98, pp. 484–85.
34. See Hegel's account of the "Beautiful Soul" in Chapter Six of the *PoS* pp. 383.
35. *Aesth.* p. 583–84. Hegel also discusses Hamlet elsewhere in *Aesth.* (p. 231, p. 244, pp. 1225–26, and pp. 1231–32) as well as in the *PoS* (par. 333, p. 201) and *PoS* (par. 737, pp. 446–47). He is also cited briefly in Hegel's *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. I discuss some of these other references below and in Chapter 9.
36. *PoS* par. 206, p. 126.
37. In my next chapter, I show that this movement beyond Fate can be interpreted as coming to terms with the problem of one's genius (in Hegel's sense of the term).
38. *Hamlet*, 1.2. 76, p. 1674.

39. *Aesth.* p. 231. In my Chapter 9, I discuss this further in relation to conscience.

40. This is not to argue that Hamlet achieves a standpoint that we view as just. I discuss the irrationality of revenge below. But it is to say that Hamlet progresses cognitively.

41. *Hamlet*, 5.2. 64–72, p. 1748.

42. *Hamlet*, 5.2. 150–54, p. 1751.

43. *Hamlet*, 5.2. 157–61, p. 1751.

44. For a different but interesting discussion of Hamlet and delay, see Margreta De Grazia's "Teleology, Delay, and the 'Old Mole'" in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Fall 1999; 50 (3): 251–67.

45. See Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*.

46. In the *Philosophy of Right*, the whole play would be happening at the level of a kind of proto-morality in which issues of conscience face concepts of right that are not entirely immediate but also not developed as far as modern legality.

47. *Hamlet*, 3.1. 122, p. 1707.

48. *PoS* par. 233, p. 140.

49. *Hamlet*, 5.2. 280–82; 289–91; 298–300, p. 1755.

50. *Hamlet*, 5.2. 323, 328–29. p. 1756.

51. See note 5 above.

52. Andrew Cutrofello suggests a comparison of this with Derrida's "visor effect." (See Derrida's *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International* translated by Peggy Kamuf with an Introduction by Bernd Magnus and Stephen Cullenberg (New York and London: Routledge, 1994) p. 7.

53. *Hamlet*, 3.2. 263–67, p. 1715.

54. *Hamlet*, 3.1. 135ff, p. 1707.

55. For a different reading of the role of skepticism in *Hamlet* see Stanley Cavell's "Hamlet's Burden of Proof" in *Disowning Knowledge in Seven Plays of Shakespeare* (Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 179–91. Cavell takes the play within the play to be a reenactment of a Freudian "primal scene" (p. 187). Hamlet's burden of proof is to show (himself and others) that he was indeed born and now exists. Without this he would be, like any subject, the victim of skepticism (p. 187). According to Cavell, Hamlet's task is rendered near impossible because he is constrained by narratives belonging to parental figures, narratives which "deprive the son of his identity, of enacting his own existence:" for example, Hamlet must revenge his father (p. 188) and deal with his mother's sexuality, which is "Gertrude's power to annihilate all Hamlets" (p. 187). Cavell concludes: "Hence the play interprets the taking of one's place in the world as a process of mourning, as if there is a taking up of the world that is humanly a question of giving it up" (p. 189). Thus, what I call a "bad structure of moral imagination" is, in Cavell's reading, Hamlet's (and our) being caught up in bad

dreams of the primal scene, dreams in which his (and our) experience of this “phylogenetic inheritance” (p. 189) is constantly being reworked in an effort to explain it and to assert personal existence over-against it. “Hamlet’s actions, not just his dreams, are our dreams” (p. 190). See also below note 75.

56. *Hamlet*, 4.5. 4ff, p. 1730.

57. Hegel’s theory of madness can be found in *Enc.Phil.Mind.Ant.* par. 408 (especially the Zusatz) pp. 122–39.

58. *Hamlet*, 5.1. p. 1740ff.

59. *Hamlet*, 5.2. 174–76, p. 1752.

60. *Hamlet*, 3.2. 321ff, p. 1716.

61. *Hamlet*, 2.2. 174–80, p. 1695.

62. *PoS* par. 333, p. 201.

63. *PoS* par. 36, p. 21 my italics, *PdG* par. 36, p. 35.

64. *Hamlet*, 5.1. 171ff, p. 1744.

65. *Hamlet*, 3.1. 66–70, p. 1705.

66. Shakespeare’s epitaph evokes a similar idea. Shakespeare may “live on” in his works, but he wanted his bones to stay put. (Shakespeare’s gravestone reads: “Good frend for Jesus sake forbear, / To digg the dust enclosed heare. / Bleste be ye man yt spares thes stones, / And curst be he yt moves my bones.”)

67. It is, despite the fact that Claudius repeatedly says it is “mere madness.” *Hamlet*, 5.1. 269, p. 1746.

68. *Hamlet*, 5.1. 254–56, p. 1746.

69. *PoS* par. 32, p. 19.

70. Ibid.

71. Ibid.

72. Ibid.

73. I borrow this expression from Northrop Frye’s book title *Fools of Time: Studies in Shakespearean Tragedy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967).

74. *PoS* par. 808, p. 493.

75. In this, Cavell’s reading returns to haunt us: Hamlet is sublated into the realm of Ghosts, for “Hamlet performs the murder and substitute murder only after announcing that he is dead, thus demonstrating that to take the Ghost’s revenge is to become the Ghost” (p. 190); likewise, according to Cavell, *Hamlet* the play sublates us into *our* primal ghost: “So Shakespeare’s power to provide a scene—one of deferred representation—with the means of establishing our experience of earlier scenes . . . is the power Freud attributes to dreams of the primal scene” (p. 191).

Notes to Chapter 4

1. This chapter is a slightly longer version of an essay originally written for *Person, Being, and History: Essays in Honor of Kenneth L. Schmitz*, editors

Robert E. Wood and Michael Baur (forthcoming Catholic University of America Press, 2010).

2. *Enc.Phil.Mind.Ant.* par. 405 Z. Section 3, p. 100.
3. *Lear* 2.4. 64–65, p. 2508 (all references are to this Conflated Text).
4. *Lear* 1.4. 201–2, p. 2495.
5. *Lear* 4.6. 145, p. 2537.
6. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bekker 144a30, p. 98.
7. Hegel does not provide an interpretation of the play. His summary of it is that

Lear in old age divides his kingdom between his daughters and, in doing so, is so mad as to trust the false and flattering words [of Goneril and Regan] and to misjudge the speechless and loyal Cordelia. This is already madness and craziness, and so the most outrageous ingratitude and worthlessness of the elder daughters and their husbands bring him to actual insanity (*Aesth.* p. 222–23).

Hegel's other briefer references to *Lear* (*Aesth.* 569, 592, 1229, 1230) refer to the play as an example for various points about tragedy or comedy. The following interpretation of *Lear* using Hegel's theory of genius in the *Anthropology*, is my own.

8. It is important to note at the start that the term “genius” (in German, *Genius*) comes up in two very different ways in Hegel's works. In Hegel's critique of the Romantic theory of genius, the term denotes roughly what we normally associate with the word—an unusually brilliant, inspired individual. Hegel rejected the Romantic celebration of the creative genius: He criticized them for raising genius above philosophy and thus for assigning to it the highest role in the individual. (See *PoS* par. 10, p. 6 and my *Hegel's Theory of Imagination* pp. 139–49.) The other meaning of the word “genius” is Hegel's word for a particular, subconscious level of the soul. It is with this subconscious kind of genius that we are concerned here.

9. It can also be translated as “sentient soul.”

10. *Enc.Phil.Mind.Ant.* par. 403, p. 92. The *Anthropology* is followed by two other subsections: “Phenomenology of Mind” and “Psychology.”

11. *Enc.Phil.Mind.Ant.* par. 389, p. 29. See also Aristotle's *On the Soul*: “The soul may therefore be defined as the first actuality of a natural body potentially possessing life; and such will be any body which possesses organs” (trans. W. S. Hett, Loeb Classical Edition. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936) BK412a27, p. 69.

12. *Enc.Phil.Mind.Ant.* par. 389, p. 29.
13. *Enc.Phil.Mind.Ant.* par. 388, p. 29.
14. *Enc.Phil.Mind.Ant.* par. 390, p. 34.

15. *Enc.Phil.Mind.Ant.* par. 403, p. 92.
16. Ibid.
17. *Enc.Phil.Mind.Ant.* par. 403, p. 93.
18. Aristotle, *On the Soul. Parva Naturalia. On Breath*, trans. W. S. Hett (Loeb Classical Edition, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936), Book II.5 and beginning of III.
19. *Enc.Phil.Mind.Ant.* par. 403, p. 93.
20. Ibid.
21. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar. (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. 1996), B132, p. 177.
22. *Enc.Phil.Mind.Ant.* par. 403, p. 93.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. *Enc.Phil.Mind.Ant.* par. 404, p. 94.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. *Enc.Phil.Mind.Ant.* Zusatz to par 402, p. 91.
30. *Enc.Phil.Mind.Ant.* Zusatz to par 402, p. 92.
31. *Enc.Phil.Mind.Ant.* par. 405, p. 94.
32. Ibid.
33. *Enc.Phil.Mind.Ant.* Zusatz to paragraph 405, p. 99.
34. *Enc.Phil.Mind.Ant.* par. 405, p. 94–95.
35. Ibid. p. 94.
36. Ibid. p. 94.
37. In the Zusatz to paragraph 405, Hegel also says a number of ridiculous things about the “corporealization of the mother’s inner feelings” into the child (e.g., birthmarks or even limb breakages derived from maternal anxieties). We cannot take these examples seriously, but we can ponder the general point.
38. Ibid. p. 95.
39. *Enc.Phil.Mind.Ant.* Zusatz to par. 405, p. 100.
40. Ibid.
41. Hegel’s theory therefore prefigures Freud’s theory of the ego in its relation to both the unconscious Id and the unconscious Superego(es). See Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, Standard Edition, editor James Strachey, Introduction by Peter Gay (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1994).
42. *Enc.Phil.Mind.Ant.* par. 408, p. 123.
43. Hegel’s discussion of genius is followed by a discussion of the self-feeling soul and then of habit. These later developments are relevant to our discussion only tangentially, so I will not develop them here.
44. Hegel’s uses the word *die Verwunderung*.

45. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. Hippocrates G. Apostle, (Grinnell, Iowa: The Peripatetic Press, 1979) 982b 11ff, p. 16.

46. *PoN* "Introduction to the Philosophy of Nature" p. 194–95 (my added italics).

47. *PoS* par. 5, p. 3.

48. It is true that, in the soul, the self is other to itself (as genius). But that contradiction is subconscious. In consciousness, the contradiction is something of which the self is aware.

49. *Enc.Phil.Mind.Phe.* Zusatz par. 416, p. 157.

50. *Enc.Phil.Mind.Phe.* Zusatz par. 416, p. 157, my italics.

51. Similarly, we *feel* wonder. We do not see it, though we may wonder at what we see. Wonder, in general, is a captivation. It holds and leads us on.

52. *Enc.Phil.Mind.Phe.* Zusatz par. 416, p. 157, my italics.

53. *Aesth.* p. 315. (*Ästh.* s. 407–408.) Hegel is here introducing "The Symbolic Form of Art." Since the passage as a whole illustrates the fact that wonder begins where the self begins to separate itself properly, I cite it here in full:

In proposing to discuss the *subjective* aspect of the first origin of symbolic art, we may recall the saying that the artistic intuition as such, like the religious—or rather both together—and even scientific research, have begun in wonder. The man who does *not yet* wonder at anything still lives in obtuseness and stupidity. Nothing interests him and nothing confronts him because he has not yet separated himself on his own account, and cut himself free, from objects and their immediate individual existence. But on the other hand whoever wonders *no longer* regards the whole of the external world as something which he has become clear about, whether in the abstract intellectual mode of a universally human Enlightenment, or in the noble and deeper consciousness of absolute spiritual freedom and universality, and thus he has changed the objects and their existence into a spiritual and self-conscious insight into them. Whereas wonder only occurs when man, torn free from his most immediate first connection with nature and from his most elementary, purely practical, relation to it, that of desire, stands back spiritually from nature and his own singularity and now seeks and sees in things a universal, implicit, and permanent element. In that case for the first time natural objects strike him; they are an "other" which yet is meant to be for his apprehension and in which he strives to find himself over again as well as thoughts and reason. Here the inkling of something higher and the consciousness of externality are still unseparated and yet at the same time there is present a contradiction between natural things and the spirit, a contradiction in which

objects prove themselves to be just as attractive as repulsive, and the sense of this contradiction along with the urge to remove it is precisely what generates wonder.

54. See Allen Wood's discussion of the inseparability of the theoretical and the practical in Hegel's philosophy in *HET* p. 31–32 and my Introduction p. 4.

55. *PoS* par. 18, p. 10.

56. Language is the “true Being of Spirit as Spirit—Spirit is there as the unity of two free selves” (“... die Sprache ... ist denn das wahre Sein des Geistes als Geistes überhaupt—er ist da als Einheit zweier freier Selbst” *Geistesphilosophie* (1803–4) in *Jenaer Systementwürfe I: Das System der Spekulativen Philosophie*, hrsg. von K. Düsing und H. Kimmerle, (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1986) s. 175. See too the “I” that is a “we” (*PoS* p. 110), and *PoS* par. 508, p. 308.

57. Kenneth L. Schmitz, *The Recovery of Wonder: The New Freedom and the Asceticism of Power* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005. Further reference will appear in the text as *Recovery*).

58. *Recovery*, p. 125.

59. *Ibid.*

60. *Ibid.*

61. *Ibid.*

62. *Ibid.*

63. *Recovery*, p. 125–26.

64. *Recovery*, p. 126.

65. *PoS* par. 17, p. 10. The statement must be read both ways—as affirming substance as well as subject, and not just subject as well as substance.

66. Again, see *HET* p. 31–32 and my Introduction p. 4.

67. See *Hegel's Theory of Imagination*, pp. 42–43.

68. See Hegel's discussion of the Chorus in tragedy in *Aesth.* p. 1210–11.

69. *Lear*, 1.1. 53–59, p. 2480.

70. *Lear*, 1.1. 70–71, p. 2481.

71. *Lear*, 1.1 85–92, p. 2481.

72. Note his oracular, god-like language as he rejects her: “Let it be so. Thy truth, then, be thy dower; / For, by the sacred radiance of the sun, / The mysteries of Hecate, and the night; / By all the operation of the orbs / From whom we do exist and cease to be, / Here I disclaim all my paternal care” (*Lear*, 1.1. 108–13, p. 2481–82).

73. It is for this reason that non-action is rejected by Sartre: It is existentially unviable.

74. *Lear*, 1.1. 124, p. 2482.

75. *Lear*, 1.1. 157, p. 2483.

76. *Lear*, 1.1. 158–59, p. 2483.

77. *Lear*, 1.1. 225–26, p. 2484.

78. *Lear*, 1.1. 185–86, p. 2483.

79. *PoR* par. 139. See my discussion in Chapter 8.

80. *Aesth.* p. 222.

81. For a discussion of the Beautiful Soul, see *PoS*, par. 632, p. 383. Basically, it is the Kantian pure will that cannot act because to act is to become determined in the heteronomy of nature and therefore to become impure.

82. Edmund says of Edgar that he is “a brother noble, / Whose nature is so far from doing harms / That he suspects none; on whose foolish honesty / My practices ride easy!” (*Lear*, 1.2. 163–66, p. 2490).

83. *Aesth.* p. 585. Hegel holds Macbeth responsible rather than the witches precisely because the witches merely represent Macbeth’s desires. We can say that the witches represent Macbeth’s genius (which is hellbent on power).

84. I discuss him above in Chapter 1.

85. *Lear*, 2.4. 242–58, p. 2512.

86. *Lear*, 3.2. 13–19, p. 2515.

87. *Lear*, 2.3. 20–21, p. 2506.

88. *Lear*, 3.4. 95–101, p. 2519.

89. *Lear*, 3.4. 29–37, p. 2518.

90. *Lear*, 4.4. 21–29, p. 2533.

91. *Lear*, 5.3. 3–19, p. 2545.

92. See my discussion of Macbeth in Chapter 9.

93. *Lear*, 1.4. 100–10, p. 2493.

94. *Lear*, 1.1. 89, p. 2481.

95. *Lear*, 1.4. 113–16, p. 2493.

96. *Lear*, 2.4. 259–60, p. 2512.

97. *Lear*, 3.2. 37–39, p. 2515.

98. *Lear*, 3.2. 36, p. 2515.

99. *Lear*, 4.6. 142–71, p. 2537–38.

100. *Lear*, 4.6. 176–77, p. 2538.

101. See *Aesth.* on comedy, p. 1220–22.

102. *Lear*, 1.4. 24–25, p. 2491.

103. *Enc.Phil.Mind.Ant.* Zusatz to par. 405, p. 97.

104. *Lear*, 1.4. 40ff, p. 2491.

105. *Lear*, 1.4. 42, p. 2491.

106. See above my note 53.

107. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bekker 144a30, p. 98.

108. *Lear*, 4.6. 145, p. 2537.

109. Gloucester’s love for Edgar (like Lear’s for Cordelia) makes his traumas subject to wonder and personal growth.

110. The loss of the bad way of seeing while keeping one’s eyes is good. We the audience walk home, organs intact. Hopefully, the tragedy we have seen has instructed us how to see *differently*.

- 111. *PoR* p. 13.
- 112. I discuss this below in Chapter 12.
- 113. *Lear*, 1.1. 158–59, p. 2483.
- 114. In this respect, the play is like Hegel's conception of ancient tragedy. See *Aesth.* pp. 1222–23 for Hegel's distinction between modern and ancient tragedy.

Notes to Part II

- 1. Here in the sense used in Hegel's *PoR*. See my Introduction, p. 10–11.
- 2. Throughout the chapters, I am using the term “sovereign” and “sovereign self” to mean princely power and also forms of autonomy, freedom, self-legislation, and self-certainty. I am concerned both with the Princes' power in these plays and with the shapes of phenomenological consciousness that take themselves to be sovereign. These differences will become clear as we proceed. (It is for this reason that we discuss Falstaff as well: Though not a prince, he is a kind of sovereign self.)
- 3. Hegel views international conflict as a necessary feature of world politics. The prevalence and necessity of these negative moments reveals why, for Hegel, Ethical life is tragic. I address this later.
- 4. “Historical narrative normally attributes a fundamental meaning to history. *The Life and Death of King John* . . . is an exception. . . . The play . . . breaks with the providential conclusion to Shakespeare's first tetralogy . . . provided by Richard III . . . and, more generally, with the moralizing strategy of Renaissance humanist historians. It moves Shakespeare closer to the pragmatic, secular political thinking of Niccolò Machiavelli” (Walter Cohen, Forward to Shakespeare's *King John* p. 1015).
- 5. See *Aesth.* p. 190 and p. 276.
- 6. *Aesth.* p. 190.
- 7. Ibid.
- 8. Ibid.
- 9. *Aesth.* p. 276.
- 10. Ibid.

Notes to Chapter 5

- 1. A shorter version of this chapter was presented to the Ontario Hegel Organization Conference on “Hegel and Other People,” University of Ottawa, April 17, 2004.
- 2. *Aesth.* p. 405.

3. Ibid.
4. *Richard II*, 4.2., cited in *Aesth.* p. 405.
5. *Aesth.* p. 417.
6. *Aesth.* p. 419.
7. Fichte, *Science of Knowledge*, ed. and trans. P. Heath and J. Lachs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 15.
8. Northrop Frye, *Something Rich and Strange*, ed. Michael Schonberg (Stratford: Stratford Festival Publication, 1982), p. 2.
9. *Richard II*, 2.1.1. 60, p. 967.
10. Frye, "The Bolingbroke Plays (*Richard II*, *Henry IV*)" in *Northrop Frye on Shakespeare* (Ontario, Canada: T. H. Best Company Limited 1989), pp. 65.
11. Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*, p. 252. Bloom gives different reasons.
12. August Wilhelm Schlegel, *Über Dramatische Kunst und Literatur* (1811), cited in English in *Shakespearean Criticism: Excerpts from the Criticism of William Shakespeare's Plays and Poetry, from the First Published Appraisals to Current Evaluations*, Vol. 6, ed., Mark W. Scott, Associate Editor Sandra L. Williamson (Michigan: Gale Research Company, 1987), p. 255.
13. Ibid.
14. *PoS* Section VB.
15. *PoS* par. 17, p. 10.
16. *PoS* pp. 211–35.
17. *PoS* par. 232, p. 139.
18. Henry S. Harris, *Hegel's Ladder*, Vol. 2, pp. 32–76.
19. *Richard II*, 1.1.1. 14, p. 953.
20. *Richard II*, 5.5., in the First Printing, Quarto, 1597. There is some irony in the fact that the later, Folio Edition changes the words (further setting words against words!). Thus the Norton Edition of the play, drawing in this instance from the First Folio Edition of 1623, gives the lines as "set the faith itself / against the faith" (5.5. 13–14, p. 1009). I thank Ian Patrick McHugh for pointing out this difference.
21. *Richard II*, 2.1. 74–75, p. 968.
22. *Richard II*, 2.1. 73–114, pp. 968–69.
23. *Richard II*, 2.1. 195–200, p. 970.
24. *PoR* par. 29, p. 33.
25. *Richard II*, 2.1. 199, p. 970, and *ibid.* 242, p. 971.
26. *Richard II*, 2.3. 84–86, p. 978.
27. Harris, *Ladder*, Vol. 2, p. 53.
28. Harris' translation of *PoS* par. 383 in *Ladder*, Vol. 2, p. 51.
29. Harris, *Ladder*, Vol. 2, p. 53.
30. *Ibid.* p. 54.
31. Harris' translation of *PoS* par. 389 in *Ladder*, Vol. 2, p. 56.

32. Harris' translation of *PoS* par. 391 in *Ladder*, Vol. 2, p. 59.
33. Harris, *Ladder*, Vol. 2, p. 60.
34. *Richard II*, 3.2. 215, p. 986.
35. *Richard II*, 5.5. 60, p. 1010, also note 9.
36. *Richard II*, 5.5. 42–66, pp. 1009–10.
37. Harris, *Ladder*, Vol. 2, p. 26.
38. Ibid. p. 27.
39. *PoR* p. 13.
40. Harris, *Ladder*, Vol. 2, p. 21.
41. *Richard II*, 3.2. 6–25, pp. 981–82.
42. Harris, *Ladder*, Vol. 2, p. 9.
43. *Richard II*, 1.3. 256.10, p. 964.
44. Harris, *Ladder*, Vol. 2, p. 38 (my italics).
45. *Richard II*, 3.2. 140–74, p. 984–85.
46. *Shakespearean Criticism*, Vol. 6, p. 259.
47. *Richard II*, 5.5. 109–44, p. 1011.
48. Harris, *Ladder*, Vol. 2, p. 61.
49. Harris, *Ladder*, Vol. 2, p. 11.

Notes to Chapter 6

1. A shorter version of this chapter was presented at the International Association for Philosophy and Literature, Freiburg, Germany, June 5–10, 2006. It was also presented to the Philosophy Department at Wilfred Laurier University, Ontario, Canada, March 31, 2006.

2. *Aesth.* p. 1227–28, my italics.

3. *Henry IV* Part 1, 2.5. 438, p. 1188.

4. “[H]e transcends virtually all our catalogings of human sin and error” and “As Bradley says, Falstaff simply refuses to recognize the social institutions of reality; he is neither immoral nor amoral but of another realm, the order of play.” Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1998), pp. 272 and 298, respectively.

5. Neither of these is Hegel’s account of Falstaff. Hegel does not provide a developed reading of Falstaff.

6. *Aesth.* p. 585–86.

7. *Aesth.* p. 592. Hegel’s third mention of Falstaff (*Aesth.* p. 592) concerns him as example of Chivalry. I discuss this below in this Chapter.

8. Alexander Schmidt, *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary*, Third Edition, Revised and Enlarged by Gregor Sarrazin, (New York: Dover Publications, Inc. 1971) Vol. II, entry for “Wit” (p. 1379–80).

9. Cited in *ibid.*, p. 1379.

10. Schmidt, *ibid.*
11. *Hamlet*, 5.1. 139–40, p. 1743.
12. Cited in Schmidt, p. 1380. According to Tylliard, the Elizabethan notion of wit in general was that it was located in man's higher cognitive faculties and often called the understanding:

Like the body, the brain was divided into a triple hierarchy. The lowest contained the five senses. The middle contained first the common sense, which received and summarized the reports of the five senses, second the fancy, and third the memory. This middle area supplied the materials for the highest to work on. *The highest contained the supreme human faculty of reason, by which man is separated from the beasts and allied to God and the angels, with its two parts, the understanding (wit) and the will. It is on these two highest human faculties, understanding and will, that Elizabethan ethics are based* (Tylliard, *The Elizabethan World Picture*, p. 79, my italics).

13. Schmidt, p. 1380.
14. *Measure for Measure*, 2.2. 130, p. 2047, cited in Schmidt *Shakespeare Lexicon*, p. 1380.
15. *Henry IV* Part 2, 2.2. 26, p. 1324, cited in Schmidt, p. 1380.
16. *As You Like It*, 1.2. 59, cited in Schmidt, p. 1380.
17. Schmidt, p. 1380.
18. Tylliard, p. 81.
19. Tylliard writes that "If the fall of man had dimmed his understanding, even more had it infected his will. For though it was possible to make a wrong choice through an error of judgement, it was also possible for the will to be so corrupt as to go against the evidence of the understanding" (Tylliard p. 81–82).
20. *Henry IV* Part 2, 1.2. 8–9, p. 1311. I am indebted to my research assistant Ian Patrick McHugh for bringing this line to my attention. Mr. McHugh also made an interesting comparison of Falstaff with the Roman character Encolpius in *The Satyricon* of Gaius Petronius Arbiter.
21. *Henry IV* Part 1, 1.1. 85ff, p. 1159.
22. *Henry IV* Part 1, 3.2. 77, p. 1196.
23. *Henry IV* Part 1, 3.2. 60ff, p. 1196.
24. *Henry IV* Part 1, 5.3. 25, p. 1217.
25. *Henry IV* Part 1, 5.3. 26–28, p. 1217.
26. *Henry IV* Part 1, 5.4. 24,, p. 1218. "A Hydra is a monster of classical myth that grew two heads whenever one was cut off. It was a common image of political disorder"—Editor's note 2, p. 1218.
27. *Henry IV* Part 1, 5.4. 25–27, p. 1218.

28. Ibid. line 34.
29. *Henry IV* Part 1, 1.2. 1ff, p. 1160.
30. I.e., be breathless; fart, (*Henry IV* Part 1, 2.2. 13–15, p. 1173).
31. *Henry IV* Part 1, 5.3. 52–53, p. 1217.
32. *Henry IV* Part 1, 5.4. 111–19, p. 1220.
33. *Henry IV* Part 1, 2.5. 103ff, p. 1180–84.
34. Ibid. line 207.
35. *Henry IV* Part 1, 5.4. 133, p. 1221.
36. Jack means “knave” (*Henry IV* Part 1, 5.4. line 134–135, p. 1221).
37. Douglas calls Percy “the king of honour” (*Henry IV* Part I, 4.1. 10, p. 1203).
38. *Henry IV* Part 1, 5.1. 127–40, p. 1213–14.
39. *Henry IV* Part 1, 5.2. 13–14, p. 1214.
40. Many interpretations, many “eyes” (*Henry IV* Part 1, 5.2. 1.8, p. 1214).
41. See Percy’s words about honor (*Henry IV* Part 1, 1.3. 178–79 and 194 and 199–206, p. 1168–69).
42. *Aesth.* p. 592.
43. *Aesth.* p. 560.
44. Ibid.
45. *Aesth.* p. 561.
46. *Aesth.* pp. 561–62.
47. Ibid.
48. *As You Like It*, 1.2. 50ff, p. 1604.
49. *Henry IV* Part 1, 2.2. 174ff, p. 1323, see note 9.
50. *Henry IV* Part 1, 2.5. 438, p. 1188.
51. Hegel’s discussions of negative infinite judgments are found in the *Encyclopedia Logic*, in the *PoR*, and in the *Science of Logic*. See also Knox’s notes 35 and 79 to *PoR* par. 53 and 95 (p. 324 and 331), respectively. For related passages, see *PoR* “Alienation of Property”; “infinite damage” *PoR* p. 59–60 addition to par. 77; infinite divisibility of time *PoR* p. 61 and note 68; remark regarding infinite judgment in *PoR* Knox note 74 to par. 85, p. 330; positive infinite judgment (“Fraud”) *PoR* par. 88, p. 66 and note 75.
52. *PoR* par. 53, p. 46.
53. Knox note 35 to *PoR* par. 53, p. 324, my italics.
54. Ibid.
55. “[J]udgement falls apart into itself as (aa) the empty *identity*-relation: the singular is the singular—judgment *of identity*; and into itself as (bb) presenting the total incommensurability [*Unangemessenheit*] of the subject and the predicate, the so-called *infinite* judgement.” *Enc.Logic*, par. 173, p. 250. Hegel writes therefore that statements like “‘The spirit is not an elephant’” or “‘A lion is a lion,’” when objectively considered, “express the nature of what

[finitely] is or of *sensible* things, namely, that they are a falling-apart into an *empty* identity and a *fulfilled* relation, which is, all the same, the *qualitative otherness of the related* [terms], their complete incommensurability" (ibid. par. 173 explanation, p. 250–51). The qualitative otherness is dependent on there being an incommensurability.

56. *Enc.Logic*, addition to par. 173, p. 251, my underlining.

57. *PoR* par. 95, p. 67–68.

58. Knox note 79 to *PoR* par. 95, p. 331. In *Sc. of Logic*, Hegel explains the Infinite Judgment in the following way. Hegel uses the evil of crime again as example:

A more realistic example of the infinite judgement is the *evil* action. In *civil litigation*, something is negated only as the property of the other party, it being conceded that it should be theirs if they had the right to it; and it is only the title of right that is in dispute; the universal sphere of right is therefore recognized and maintained in that negative judgment. *But crime is the infinite judgement which negates not merely the particular right, but the universal sphere as well, negates right as right.* This infinite judgment does indeed possess correctness, since it is an actual deed, but it is nonsensical because it is related purely negatively to morality which constitutes its universal sphere (*Sc. of Logic* p. 642).

59. *Henry IV* Part 1, 2.3. 1–3, p. 1175.

60. *As You Like It*. 1.2. 46, p. 1604.

61. *PoS* par. 523, p. 318.

62. Ibid.

63. *PoS* par. 521, p. 317.

64. *PoS* par. 523, p. 318.

65. I am not suggesting that Falstaff and this man are the same. See my discussion about anachronism and productive tensions in my Preface, pp. xii–xiii. They are similar enough to be discussed together.

66. *PoS* par. 522, p. 317–18.

67. *PoS* par. 526, p. 320.

68. I thank Jay Lampert for this expression.

69. There are many instances of witty characters in history. Hegel's location of wit in the period prior to the French Revolution captures the wit that arises out of cultural alienation, that is, out of the alienation of the "I" that is a "we." Although the historical periods differ, this form of wit is close enough to the kind present in *Henry IV* that it provides helpful insights. Furthermore, Hegel's account of wit here is not limited to seventeenth-century France: Indeed there is no mention other than the citation of Rameau's nephew that

we are dealing with that period in history. As always, we must be careful not to explain phenomenological moments and their dialectical developments too much in connection with a particular history.

70. *PoS* par. 525, p. 319.

71. *PoS* par. 526, p. 320–21.

72. This is my insertion; Hegel does not make the link between wit and negative infinite judgment.

73. *Henry IV* Part 1, 4.1. 1–4, p. 1203.

74. *PoS* par. 526, p. 320–21, my italics.

75. Hegel writes:

On the one hand, art passes over to the presentation of common reality as such . . . ; on the other hand, it turns vice versa into a mode of conception and portrayal completely contingent on the artist, i.e. into humour as the perversion and derangement of everything objective and real by means of wit and the play of a subjective outlook, and it ends with the artist's personal productive mastery over every content and form (*Aesth.* p. 576).

This is described again later in *Aesth.* Hegel explains that romantic inwardness is indifferent to the contingencies of the external world, and it is that contingency that ultimately leads to the dissolution of the Romantic art:

Within this contingency of the objects which come to be portrayed partly as a mere environment for an inherently more important subject matter, but partly also as independent on their own account, there is presented the collapse of romantic art. . . . On one side, . . . there stands the real world in, from the point of view of the ideal, its prosaic *objectivity*: the contents of ordinary daily life which is not apprehended in its substance (in which it has an element of the ethical and divine), but in its mutability and finite transitoriness. On the other side, it is the *subjectivity* of the artist which, with its feeling and insight, with the weight and power of its wit, can rise to mastery of the whole of reality; it leaves nothing in its usual context and in the validity which it has for our usual way of looking at things; and it is satisfied only because everything drawn into this sphere proves to be inherently dissoluble owing to the shape and standing given to it by its subjective opinion, mood, and originality; and for contemplation and feeling it is dissolved (*Aesth.* p. 595, my italics).

First there is the portrayal in the sense of imitation of nature, second there is "subjective humour which plays a great role in modern art and provides,

especially for many poets, the fundamental type of their works;" and third, "what still remains to us is only to indicate the standpoint from which art can pursue its activity even in these days" (*Aesth.* p. 595).

76. *Henry IV* Part 2, 3.2. 85ff, p. 1341.

77. *PoS* par. 526, p. 320.

78. There is an ontological character to linguistic upset in culture. We are not just dealing with empty verbiage or wordplays. Everything can turn into its opposite: Ambiguities are real, as are witty insights. For Hegel, language is the medium of this dialectic of culture. Language is (the being of) Spirit: It has ontological clout. Falstaff knows full well the performative side of language, even in the very moment that he declares that "honor," as a word, is "air."

79. Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

80. Butler, *Excitable Speech*, p. 163.

81. *PoS* par. 522, p. 317–18.

Notes to Chapter 7

1. Hegel does not discuss the play or character of Henry V. My assessment of Henry V (in this chapter and the next two chapters) is developed from concepts about which Hegel does write and that are most relevant in the play.

2. A shorter version of this chapter was presented at the Center for Comparative Literature, University of Toronto, November 27, 2006.

3. Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention*, p. 323.

4. *Henry IV* Part 1, 2.3. 1–3, p. 1175.

5. *Romeo and Juliet*, 1.4. 30, p. 883.

6. See *Hegel's Theory of Imagination*, pp. 42ff

7. See above Chapter 6.

8. *Henry IV* Part 1, 1.2. 187. The editors note that "Injunctions to redeem time were both proverbial and biblical: see Ephesians 5:16 or Colossians 4:5." *Henry IV* Part 1, 1.3. note 9, p. 1164.

9. Indeed we have already seen one shape of this dialectical interdependence in our Chapter 5 discussion of Virtue and the Way of the World.

10. *Richard II*, 5.5. 46–50, p. 1009.

11. *Henry IV* Part 1, 1.1. 1–27 p. 1157–58. He makes the pledge in *Richard II*, 5.6. 45–52 p. 1012.

12. *Henry IV* Part 1, 1.2. 173ff, p. 1164.

13. For discussions of mirroring inversions, see my Chapters 5 and 6.

14. *Henry IV* Part 1, 5.4.7, p. 1219.

15. *Richard II*, 5.4. 8–9, p. 1009.

16. Ibid. 80–83, p. 1219.
17. *Henry V*, 4.1. 211ff, p. 1496.
18. It echoes Hal's earlier soliloquy at his father's death bed about the crown being a source of cares (*Henry IV* Part 2, 4.3.160, p. 1349 and 4.3. 286–92, p. 1362).
19. *Henry V*, 4.1. 291, p. 1497.
20. *Henry V*, 4.1. 50, p. 1492.
21. *Henry IV*, Part 1, 1.2. 24ff, p. 1160.
22. Bradley, "The Rejection of Falstaff," p. 254.
23. *Henry IV*, Part 1, 1.2. 20–26.
24. *Henry IV*, Part 1, 1.2. 27–34.
25. Greenblatt writes:

The character called Vice is an inheritance of the medieval morality play: the busy enemy of mankind, the Vice was at once the agent of hell and the tool of divine providence, a master plotter and a puppet in a play that is not of his own making. Yet this fixed place in the divine plan did not preclude his acquiring an extraordinary theatrical power and resourcefulness, qualities that Shakespeare would later exploit in characters as different (and as magnificent) as Falstaff and Iago. . . . [Shakespeare constructs his Vice characters] out of many elements in the Vice tradition: a jaunty use of asides, a delight in sharing his schemes with the audience, a grotesque appearance, a penchant for disguise, a manic energy and humor, and a wickedly engaging ability to defer though not finally to escape well-deserved punishment. (Greenblatt, forward to *Richard III*, p. 510).

26. *Henry IV* Part 1, 2.5. 413, p. 1187.
27. Greenblatt, *Will in the World*, pp. 60ff and pp. 70–71.
28. *Henry IV* Part 2, 5.5. 41 and 45–49, p. 1373–74.
29. Greenblatt, *Will in the World*, p. 71.
30. *Henry IV* Part 2, 2.5. 435, p. 1188.
31. *Henry V*, 4.0. 43, p. 1491.
32. Hegel, "Sculpture as the Art of the Classical Ideal" *Aesth.* p. 719, my underlining.
33. Hegel, *Aesth.* p. 719–20.
34. *Henry V*, 2.3. 11–12, p. 1471.
35. Bradley, "The Rejection of Falstaff," p. 258.
36. I think Hal does have passion, just not the right kind. See my discussion next Chapter.
37. *Henry IV* Part 1, 3.3. 123–26, p. 1201.
38. *Henry IV* Part 2, 5.5. 46, p. 1373.

39. Bradley, "The Rejection of Falstaff," p. 261–63 and 272–73.

40. *Aesth.* p. 563.

41. *Aesth.* p. 562.

42. *Aesth.* p. 562.

43. *Ibid.* 563.

44. *Aesth.* p. 563.

45. *Henry IV* Part 1, 1.2. 137, p. 1163.

46. *Henry IV* Part 2, 4.2. 79ff, p. 1355–56.

47. *Aesth.* p. 565.

48. *Aesth.* p. 565.

49. *Aesth.* p. 565.

50. Later, in the subsection "What the Substantial Interest Is in the Presentation of Formal Character," Hegel summarizes two kinds of people. We would use the first to describe Hal, the second to describe Falstaff:

[First there is] the endless will-power of the particular person who asserts himself just as he is and storms ahead at will, or alternatively, [second] they present an inherently total and unrestricted heart which, touched on some specific side of its inner being, now concentrates the breadth and depth of its whole individuality on this one point, yet, by possessing no development into the external world, falls into a collision and cannot find itself and help itself prudently (*Aesth* p. 585).

51. *Aesth.* p. 566–67.

52. *Aesth.* p. 571–72.

53. *Aesth.* p. 568.

54. Andrew Cutrofello, whom I thank for being such a close reader of the final version of this manuscript, highlights the intriguing and telling fact that Falstaff refers to Hal as "my Jove," the God of the *sun* (not moon). This helps me to put the whole argument thus far in a nutshell: Falstaff's love of Hal has its basis in their being witty men of the moon, but Falstaff's love is pinned on a sovereign star (Jove, the King); there is nonetheless more to Falstaff's conception of *his* Jove than either the moon's reflective thieving of the sun's light or the bright power of sovereignty.

55. A final note regarding love. According to Hegel, Romantic chivalric love "does not occur in classical art" (*Aesth.* p. 563). This is interesting in light of our discussion below. There we discuss how Hal's main pathos—virtue—exists only in classical times and has no real place in later times.

56. *Aesth.* p. 569.

57. *Aesth.* p. 569–70.

58. According to Hegel, "Fidelity and obedience to the overlord . . . very easily come into collision with subjective passion" (*Aesth.* p. 570).

59. Hegel exclaims that this is something that “cannot be allowed . . . in a rationally organized political life!” (*Aesth.* p. 571).

60. *Henry V*, 2.2. 139, p. 1470.

61. *Henry V*, 1.2. 259–96, p. 1463.

62. *Henry V*, 4.3.

63. *Henry V*, 4.3. 18ff, p. 1499–1500.

64. See e.g., *Henry V*, 4.1, 1–54, p. 1490–91.

65. *Henry V*, 2.4. 35, p. 1473.

66. Bloom, *The Invention*, p. 324.

67. *Henry V*, 3.3. 82ff, p. 1480–81.

68. *Henry V*, 3.3. 40ff, p. 1478.

69. *Henry V*, 2.0. 3–4, p. 1464.

70. *Henry V*, 3.6. 5–13, p. 1484.

71. *Henry V*, 3.6. 109, p. 1486.

72. *Henry V*, 3.7. 98, p. 1486.

73. *Henry V*, 3.7. 11–36, p. 1487–88.

74. This section is drawn largely from Hegel’s *PoR* and from Allen Wood’s *Hegel’s Ethical Thought* (*HET*). The only reference to Shakespeare in Hegel’s *PoR* is in his Introduction. Hegel there mentions briefly how Shylock, in *The Merchant of Venice*, would have benefited from a certain Roman Legal clause that Hegel is discussing (*PoR* p. 18–19).

75. Since Hegel comes after Kant, virtue is also a way of overcoming the apparent gap between reason and inclination. “Hegel regards Aristotelian virtue as a direct answer to the Kantian duality of reason and inclination” (*HET* p. 214).

76. In the *PoS*, there is a section of the chapter on Reason (not an ancient form of consciousness) entitled “Virtue and the way of the world.” We analyzed this in our Chapter 5 on *Richard II*. That section in Hegel provides a phenomenological account of the trials of virtue in relation to more and more complex forms of consciousness. But the dialectic is continued into the next chapter on Spirit in the shape of the problems of the honest consciousness in relation to wit. My argument in part is that once wit enters the picture, we cannot go back to the honesty of virtue. This is supported by the fact that in various writings by Hegel, virtue never ultimately wins as *virtue*. Its dialectical diremptions make it turn into something else. For example, by the time we reach the Ethical State in *PoR*, virtue has turned into rectitude. I argue below that Henry V’s virtuous stance is not tenable given the progress through wit that has occurred in the plays.

77. *PoR* par. 150.

78. Wood is here paraphrasing Hegel’s *PoR* par. 150, among other passages (see *HET* 215).

79. *HET* p. 214.

80. *Vorlesungen über Ästhetik*, 1: 241/250 paraphrased by Wood (*HET* p. 215).

81. *Julius Caesar*, 5.5. 67, p. 1588.
82. *Vorlesungen über Ästhetik 1*: 240–41/250 cited in *HET* endnote 12, p. 277. Elsewhere, Hegel writes that Virtue is “‘readiness to sacrifice oneself for an Idea realized in one’s fatherland’” (*Hegels Theologische Jugendschriften*, Tuebingen, 1907, p. 223, cited in Knox PR note 35 to par. 273, p. 368).
83. *PoR*. “Ethical Life” par. 150, p. 107–8.
84. Wood, *HET* p. 216.
85. *PoR* Par. 150, p. 107.
86. Wood translation of *PoR* par. 207 in *HET* p. 216.
87. *Henry V*, 1.2. 1ff, p. 1457ff.
88. *Henry V*, 1.2. 96, p. 1459.
89. Wood is describing our modern experience of virtue. He continues: “Hegel is unimpressed with contemporary Romantic attempts to revive the heroic ideal in a modern context—as in Schiller’s *The Robbers*. A truer insight into its fate, in his view, was provided in the early seventeenth century by Cervantes’ *Don Quixote*” (*HET* p. 216). See Hegel, *Vorlesungen über Ästhetik 1*: 253/262.
90. Or, as Bradley suggests “The King could have communicated his decision, and Falstaff could have accepted it, in a private interview rich in humour and merely touched with pathos” (“The Rejection of Falstaff,” p. 253).
91. Kenneth Branagh’s film interpretation of *Henry V* takes considerable license in this matter, using flashbacks not present in Shakespeare’s play in order to generate a glimmer of remorse in *Henry V*. But there is no evidence for this in the play itself.
92. *Aesth.* p. 408.
93. *Julius Caesar*, 3.1. 60–62
94. James Shapiro, *A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare: 1599* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2006), p. 136 and 137.
95. *Ibid.*
96. The book burning is also mentioned as an explanation for remarks made in *As You Like It*: Touchstone: “The more pity that fools may not speak wisely what wise men do foolishly.” Celia: “By my troth, thou sayst true; for since the little wit that fools have was silenced, the little foolery that wise men have makes a great show” (1.2.73ff, p. 1605). The editors remark that: “This is a possible allusion to the Bishop of London’s order for the burning of satirical books in June 1599” (*Ibid.* note 6).

Notes to Chapter 8

1. This section draws from Hegel’s *Lectures on Aesthetics*.
2. *Aesth.* p. 222.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Aesth.* p. 1212.

5. Ibid.
6. *Aesth.* p. 500.
7. *Aesth.* p. 222.
8. *Aesth.* p. 1227–28.
9. *Aesth.* p. 579.
10. *Aesth.* p. 244.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. This section draws on *PoS* and the *PoR*.
14. *PoR* par. 139 addition, p. 92.
15. Diremption is the translation for *Trennung* given by Knox in *PoR* Addition to Paragraph 4, p. 226.
16. *PoS* par. 796, p. 484. A more extended discussion in the *PoS* takes place in a section called “Conscience, Evil and its Forgiveness.” But I do not want to investigate evil’s dialectical relationship with forgiveness here. (I deal with forgiveness later in this chapter and more extensively in Chapter 10.) Here, we are concerned with the origin and shape of evil, not the overcoming of evil.
17. See *PoS*, Chapter Two (paragraphs 126–28, p. 76).
18. For another account of the monadic structure, see my brief account of Hegel’s feeling soul, above in Chapter 4.
19. See Kant’s *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, par. 434, p. 40.
20. There are three general categories of wrong that develop in the transition, each worse than the last. These are (a) non-malicious Wrong, (b) Fraud, and (c) Coercion and Crime. Of these, crime is what interests us the most, since it is an instance of what Hegel calls the negative infinite judgment. Hegel does not explicitly make war a third moment.
21. See my Chapter 6.
22. Lukács, Georg, *The Young Hegel: Studies in the Relations between Dialectics and Economics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1966) p. 488–91.
23. If one considers the anachronisms, I am taking considerable license in the following application of Hegel’s *PoR* to feudal royalty. But if one focuses on the idea of a “sovereign self” as phenomenological social reasoning and then traces its developments, the comparison works.
24. *Henry IV* Part 1, 3.2. 61–74.
25. Hegel explains the transition from abstract right through wrong to a more complete standpoint. Keep in mind Richard II’s personal growth over the play, in terms of his own sense of his will:

In contract the principle of rightness is present as something posited, while its inner universality is there as something common in the arbitrariness and particular will of the parties. This *appearance* of right, in which right and its essential embodiment, the particular

will, correspond immediately, i.e., fortuitously, proceeds in wrong to become a *show*, an opposition between the principle of rightness and the particular will as that in which right becomes particularized. But the truth of this show is its nullity and the fact that right reasserts itself by negating this negation of itself. In this process the right is mediated by returning into itself out of the negation of itself; thereby it makes itself actual and valid, while at the start it was only implicit and something immediate (*PoR* par. 82, p. 64, see also note 73).

By the time he gets to prison, Richard is self-conscious of his will as both personal and social, even though he is now completely socially alienated.

26. As I have argued, Falstaff has heart and his heart has within it the basis of the common bond. But it is not developed enough. Furthermore, his heart is fatally attached to Hal and Hal's allegiance to Falstaff's wit.

27. I have used the words freedom and autonomy. It should be noted however that crime, as a negative infinite judgment, is embedded in its relation to property and so is not the freedom of the citizen. It is a negation at a particular level of exchange and of that exchange's concept. There are degrees of complexity of negative infinite judgments. Crime is the first level; evil is the second. The only true freedom for Hegel is that of the fully ethical citizen, and even then, one has to be prepared to die for one's country. This raises the question as to whether there is any absolute freedom in Hegel's philosophy, particularly if ethical life is tragic. We address this more next chapter. The question is also tangentially addressed in Chapters 10 and 11, where we discuss Shakespeare's Romance plays in relation to Absolute Knowing.

28. *Henry IV* Part 2, 3.1. 63ff, p. 1338.

29. *Henry IV*, Part 2, 4.3. 365, p. 1364.

30. Hegel explains that the Unhappy Consciousness

cannot lay hold of the "other" as an *individual* or as an *actual* Being. Where that "other" is sought, it cannot be found, for it is supposed to be just a *beyond*, something that can *not* be found. When sought as a particular individual, it is not a *universal* individuality in the form of thought, not a *Notion*, but an individual in the form of an object, or an *actual* individual; an object of immediate sense-certainty, and for that very reason only something that has already vanished. Consciousness, therefore, can only find as a present reality the *grave* of its life. But because this grave is itself an *actual existence* and it is contrary to the nature of what actually exists to afford a lasting possession, the presence of that grave, too, is merely the struggle of an enterprise doomed to failure (*PoS* par. 217, pp. 131–32).

31. *Henry IV* Part I, 2.3. 1–3, p. 1175.
32. *Henry V*, 5.2. 253, p. 1518.
33. Hegel's extended discussion of Evil in *PoR* lies In "Morality:" Subsection 3: "Good and Conscience" (*PoR* par. 139–40, Knox p. 92–103).
34. See too Knox's note 41 to par. 139, *PoR* p. 342.
35. *PoR*. Remark to par. 139, p. 93.
36. See for example, Sartre's "Existentialism is a Humanism" (Yale University Press, 2004) and the conclusion of De Beauvoir's *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (Kensington Publishing Corporation, 2000).
37. *PoR* par. 129, p. 86.
38. Evil does not have to be teleological: It can seek the pleasure of the moment, even the pleasure of pure chaos in the moment.
39. Hegel writes: "Man is therefore evil by a conjunction between his natural or undeveloped character and his reflection into himself; and therefore evil belongs neither to nature as such by itself—unless nature were supposed to be the natural character of the will which rests in its particular content—nor to introverted reflection by itself, i.e., cognition in general, unless this were to maintain itself in that opposition to the universal" (*PoR* par. 139, p. 93).
40. *Ibid.*
41. We recall that the common good is the commitment to our freedom and to the freedom of others since we are, as the I that is a We, intersubjectively free.
42. *PoR* par. 139, p. 93.
43. Falstaff realizes that the point of honor is ridiculous; Hal uses the point of honor as cause for war.
44. *PoR* par. 139, p. 92–93.
45. Granted, Hegel occasionally makes it sound as if evil were a question of sin. But he clarifies that the truth of the original sin is to be understood in terms of the self not having risen to the level of freedom:

[t]he Christian doctrine that man is by nature evil is loftier than the other which takes him to be by nature good. [But] [t]his doctrine is to be understood as follows in accordance with the philosophical exegesis of it: As mind, man is a free substance which is in the position of not allowing itself to be determined by natural impulse. When man's condition is immediate and mentally undeveloped, he is in a situation in which he ought not to be and from which he must free himself. This is the meaning of the doctrine of original sin without which Christianity would not be the religion of freedom (*PoR* #14 addition to par. 18, Knox p. 231).

Knox points us to par. 139, *PoR* and Addition to Enc., par. 24.

46. This is my distinction but it is implicit in Hegel's discussion.

47. "Hegel thinks it is an illusion to identify the ego with this power of abstraction, as Fichte seems to. For this may lead us perversely to equate absolute freedom with "the flight from every content as from a restriction" (*PoR* par. 5). This is the misguided conception to which Hegel gives the name 'negative freedom'" (*HET* p. 48).

48. *Richard III*, 4.4. 71, p. 574.

49. Wood points us to *PoS* par. 367–80, 582–95; *HET* p. 44. For more on this topic, see Hegel's "Absolute Freedom and Terror" section of the *PoS* p. 355ff; see also his "The Negative, or Freedom or Transgression" in his *System of Ethical Life*, p. 129ff. See also "tragedy in the realm of the ethical" in *The Young Hegel*, by Georg Lukacs, 1938. We discuss the Terror further in Chapter 12.

50. Fackenheim, Emil, *To Mend the World: Foundations of Post-Holocaust Thought* (New York: Schocken Books, 1989) p. 234. Fackenheim's term is actually "radical evil" and he attributes it to Schelling's *Religion and Philosophy* of 1804. See also Fackenheim and Doull, "Would Hegel Today be a Hegelian" *Dialogue* (1970) 222–35.

51. Fackenheim and Doull "Would Hegel Today be a Hegelian" p. 226. See also David Bronstein's discussion in "Hegel and the Holocaust" (*Animus* 10 (2005) www.swgc.mun.ca/animus. 53).

52. I return to the problem of evil sovereign willing in Chapter 12.

53. *PoR* par. 139, p. 92–93.

54. "This sort of denouement is usually so presented that the individuals are shipwrecked on a power confronting them which they had deliberately defied in the pursuit of their own private ends" (*Aesth.* p. 1230.)

55. See the beginning of Chapter 7.

56. *Henry IV* Part 2, 3.1. 44ff, pp. 1337–38.

Notes to Chapter 9

1. *Henry IV* Part 2, 2.2. 41–42, p. 1324.

2. *Julius Caesar*, 2.1. 18, p. 1546.

3. "Hegel's treatment of conscience is . . . ambivalent. It involves a critique of post-Kantian moral thinking, following Fichte. The *Phenomenology* account, it seems, is aimed at the German Romantics, especially Friedrich Schlegel, Schleiermacher, and Novalis, whereas the *Philosophy of Right's* lengthy treatment of conscience looks like a sustained attack on the so-called ethics of conviction (*Überzeugungsethik*)" (*HET* p. 174–75). Wood claims that Hegel's attack here is against Fries. Wood provides an excellent argument for that as well as a description of Hegel's position, its strengths and weaknesses (see *HET* p. 174–92). Our concern is primarily with the account in *PoR*.

4. *Aesth.* p. 278 and *Aesth.* p. 458, *HET* p. 187.
5. *PoR.* Remark to par 137, p. 91–92.
6. Hegel explains:

Conscience is the expression of the absolute title of subjective self-consciousness to know in itself and from within itself what is right and obligatory, to give recognition only to what it thus knows as good, and at the same time to maintain that whatever in this way it knows and wills is in truth right and obligatory. Conscience as this unity of subjective knowing with what is absolute is a sanctuary which it would be sacrilege to violate. But whether the conscience of a specific individual corresponds with this Idea of conscience, or whether what it takes or declares to be good is actually so, is ascertainable only from the content of the good it seeks to realize. What is right and obligatory is the absolutely rational element in the will's volitions and therefore it is not in essence the *particular* property of an individual, and its form is not that of feeling or any other private (i.e. sensuous) type of knowing, but essentially that of universals determined by thought, i.e. the form of laws and principles. Conscience is therefore subject to the judgement of its truth or falsity, and when it appeals only to itself for a decision, it is directly at variance with what it wishes to be, namely the rule for a mode of conduct which is rational, absolutely valid, and universal. For this reason, the state cannot give recognition to conscience in its private form as subjective knowing, any more than science can grant validity to subjective opinion, dogmatism, and the appeal to a subjective opinion. In true conscience, its elements are not different, but they may become so, and it is the determining element, the subjectivity of willing and knowing, which can sever itself from the true content of conscience, establish its own independence, and reduce that content to a form and a show (*PoR.* Remark to par. 137, p. 91–92).

The *Phenomenology* account of conscience has to do with working out the formal conscience into true conscience (see Harris' final footnote to that section in *Ladder* vol. 2 p. 520). In the *Philosophy of Right*, morality deals with *formal* conscience; and *true* conscience arises after the transition from morality to ethical life. According to Hegel, true conscience in the ethical realm is patriotism, but only toward a rational State (not toward an irrational one) since conscience accepts only rational laws. In religion, it is in Protestantism that true conscience coincides perfectly with formal conscience (see *Enc.* par. 552). Hegel also identifies Conscience with Socrates and with the Stoics. Alan

Speight deals with the anachronism in this identification in his article “Hegel on Conscience and the History of Moral Philosophy” in *Hegel: New Directions*, edited by Katerina Deligiorgi (Chesham: Acumen, 2006) p. 17–32.

7. *PoR* par. 137, p. 90.

8. Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 9.

9. *PoR* par. 129, p. 86.

10. *PoR* par. 129, p. 86.

11. *PoR* par. 151, p. 108–9.

12. *PoR* par. 152, p. 109.

13. *PoR* par. 152, p. 109.

14. See above pages 171–72 and 175.

15. *PoR*. Remark to par. 152, p. 109.

16. *PoR* par. 139, p. 92. Wickedness arises from the realization that one can view the universal good as abstract, as external to oneself, as one possibility among others. One is then in a position to choose evil ends over good ones because they are all the same, all empty. As Hegel explains elsewhere, the wicked person “is capable of making the universal itself a particular and in that way a semblance. The good is thus reduced to the level of a mere ‘may happen’ for the agent, who can therefore decide on something opposite to the good, can be wicked” (*Enc.Phil.Mind.* par. 509, p. 252).

17. *PoR* par. 139, p. 92–93.

18. *Enc.Phil.Mind.* par. 509, p. 252

19. *Enc.Phil.Mind.* par. 515, p. 254.

20. A good historical account of the use of word hypocrisy is found in *Duty and Hypocrisy in Hegel's Phenomenology of Mind: An essay in the Real and the Ideal* by Jonathan Robinson, University of Toronto Press, Toronto and Buffalo, 1977, p. 115ff.

21. *PoR*. Remark to par. 140, p. 94. Hegel goes on to complain: “it is the form into which evil has blossomed in our present epoch, a result due to philosophy, i.e. to a shallowness of thought which has twisted a profound concept into this shape and usurped the name of philosophy, just as it has arrogated to evil the name of good” (*Ibid.*) This closely matches his criticism of the irony of the Romantics.

22. *Ibid.*

23. Hegel discusses hypocrisy in relation to conscience in the *PoS* as well. There, Hegel shows, among other things, that any position which a self might take on the grounds of conscience can be taken by another person to be a sham; the other person can call that conscientious declaration to be hypocritical (*PoS* par. 659–60, p. 400–1). See the reasons for this in Hegel's the dialectical development of “Conscience, Evil and its Forgiveness” in *PoS*.

24. *HET* p. 188. Wood indicates that he is drawing from *PoR* par. 140, remark.

25. *HET* p. 188.

26. *PoR* par. 137, remark.

27. *HET* p. 188.

28. With regard to the amplitude of his evil (as opposed to its depth), we note Greenblatt's observation: in no other play does the evil character play centre stage; "Only Hamlet, of all Shakespeare's plays, is comparably dominated by a single character, and only Macbeth is comparably structured around an evil hero. All other evil characters in Shakespeare stand at varying degrees of distance from the main protagonist" (Greenblatt, "Forward" to *Richard III*, p. 511).

29. *Richard III*, 5.6. 37–43, p. 593.

30. *Richard III*, 3.1. 82–83, p. 549. See Greenblatt "Forward" p. 510.

31. Hegel remarks that the "more idiosyncratic the character . . . which fixedly considers itself alone [the more] easily [it is] on the verge of evil" (*Aesth.* p. 579).

32. *Richard III*, 4.4. 71, p. 574.

33. *Richard III*, 1.3. 222–30, p. 530.

34. Greenblatt reads *Richard III* this way: "there is a pervasive sense that the characters exist as figures in someone else's play: through most of the performance, they are figures, without knowing it, in Richard's play, but Richard himself is a figure in another play, larger than himself. That larger play is at once the drama of history, scripted (as Tudor ideology claimed) by God, and the historical drama, scripted by Shakespeare" (Greenblatt, "Foreword" p. 512).

35. I am here referring to the way that the film production of *Richard III* starring Ian McKellen ends: Richard smiles as he falls into the flames ("Richard III," Bayly/Pare Productions, directed by Richard Loncraine, 1995). Hegel praises Shakespeare for "fish-eye" representations like this: "In Shakespeare we find no justification, no condemnation, but only an observation of the universal fate; individuals view its necessity without complaint or repentance, and from that standpoint they see everything perish, themselves included, as if they saw it all happening outside themselves" (*Aesth.* p. 586).

36. *Richard III*, 5.6. 39, p. 593.

37. *Aesth.* p. 577.

38. "In them there is no question of religious feeling, of an action due to the man's own religious reconciliation, or of morality as such. On the contrary, we have individuals before us, resting independently on themselves alone, with particular ends which are their own, prescribed by their individuality alone, and which they now set themselves to execute with the unshakeable logic of passion, without any accompanying reflection or general principle, solely for their own satisfaction. The tragedies especially, like *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *Richard III*, and others, have as their chief topic one such character surrounded by others less prominent and energetic" (*Aesth.* p. 577–78).

39. *Aesth.* p. 578.

40. *Aesth.* p. 592.

41. Greenblatt, "Forward," p. 511.

42. *Aesth.* p. 1230.

43. *Richard III*, 3.7. p. 562ff.

44. "Slipping" is the *PoR* translation for the German term *umschlagen*. In German it means "*auf die andere Seite wenden*" which in English is "to turn to the other side" (*Wahrig Deutsches Wörterbuch* s. 1321). In what follows I take "slip" more strongly than it is perhaps usually meant in the German. But here it is legitimate: As we proceed it will become clear that "slipping" is a key to understanding the subtleties inherent in Hegel's theory of conscience and evil.

45. *Aesth.* p. 231.

46. *Hamlet*, 3.1. 85, p. 1706.

47. According to Hegel, the resolution of the play *Hamlet* occurs "in his [Hamlet's] own withdrawn inner life" not on the outside (*Aesth.* p. 584); "what transpires when Hamlet acts externally are mistakes (the murder of Polonius); Hamlet is too inward and cannot perform outwardly within the totality" (*Ibid.*). I disagree with Hegel. It is as much Hamlet's doing (especially with his staging of the Mouse Trap) as the goings on outside him, which result in the play's collision coming to a resolution.

48. *Macbeth*, 3.4. 36ff, p. 2591.

49. The theater of action in *Richard III* is completely outside of Richard: Richard chooses his evil and he runs the show completely in the open. He hides his evil actions only as long as he needs to and even then it is behind a thin veil.

50. *Aesth.* p. 578, my italics.

51. *Ibid.*

52. *Aesth.* p. 578. Elsewhere, Hegel compares Hamlet and Macbeth with regard to singleness of passion:

Hamlet is a beautiful and noble heart; not inwardly weak at all, but, without a powerful feeling for life, in the feebleness of his melancholy he strays distressed into error; he has a keen sense of how the weather lies; no external sign, no ground for suspicion is there, but he feels uncanny, everything is not as it ought to be; he surmises the dreadful deed that has been done. His father's ghost gives him more details. Inwardly he is quickly ready for revenge; he steadily thinks of the duty prescribed to him by his own heart; but he is not carried away, like Macbeth; he does not kill, rage, or strike with . . . directness (*Aesth.* p. 583–84).

53. *Aesth.* p. 579.

54. *Aesth.* p. 1227.

55. *Aesth.* p. 1227.

56. *Aesth.* p. 585.

57. *Aesth.* p. 230–31.

58. *Aesth.* p. 578–79.

59. *Aesth.* p. 579.

60. *Aesth.* p. 208.

61. *Aesth.* p. 579.

62. *Aesth.* p. 579.

63. This raises a problem for Hegel's view that we are responsible for evil (see above, Chapter 8 Part V, pp. 196ff). The issue is partially solved in my discussion below: I show that Macbeth is wicked, not evil—he therefore cannot be responsible in the same way as someone who has a conscience (as Hegel defines conscience). But it is precisely our aim in what follows, to tease out complexities in the relationships between responsibility, evil, other forms of badness, and conscience.

64. *Enc.Phil.Mind.* par. 552, p. 285.

65. *Enc.Phil.Mind.* par. 552, p. 284–85, my bold and underlining.

66. The most immediate form of an objective will is the one “absorbed in its object or condition, whatever the content of these may be; it is the will of the child, the ethical will [in the Antigone sense] also the will of the slave, the superstitious man &c” (*PoR* par. 26, p. 32). Wood notes that Hegel elsewhere qualifies that such a will is “without freedom” (*HET* 217).

67. Hegel was not above making erroneous caricatures, for example, of the Catholic Church or of women (e.g., he writes that “Lady [Macbeth] is shattered by the madness within her feminine soul” (*Aesth.* 578)).

68. *PoR* par. 139, addition, p. 92.

69. *Aesth.* p. 578–79.

70. *Macbeth*, 4.2. 15–25, p. 2601.

71. *Macbeth*, 2.3. 93–94, p. 2582.

72. As we see in my Chapter 1, this is the negation, *the negation of which* allows us to rise to a rational ethical stance. For Hegel, we only get to an ethical position through a negation of negation. In terms of the concepts we developed in Chapter 7, Iago commits an identity crime, he is a thief of identity; he makes a negative infinite judgment upon himself in order to then rob others of their identities, all to his advantage. This puts him in the arena of moral-immoral decisions. In that arena, he chooses his particularity and is therefore evil.

73. *Macbeth*, 1.3. 137–39, p. 2569.

74. *PoR* par. 140, addition, p. 95.

75. *Aesth.* p. 578. This is different from A. C. Bradley's account. According to Bradley, Macbeth possesses “a conscience so vivid that his deed is to him beforehand a thing of terror, and, once done, condemns him to that torture of

the mind on which he lies in restless ecstasy" (Bradley, A. C., "Hegel's Theory of Tragedy" in *Hegel on Tragedy*, edited with an Introduction by Anne and Henry Paolucci, Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1962) p. 382. I address this again below.

76. *Macbeth*, 1.7. 55–59, p. 2575.

77. We recall that the reason that infinite subjectivity is capable of either good or evil is that "self-consciousness has reduced all otherwise valid duties to emptiness and itself to the sheer inwardness of the will" (*Enc.Logic.* par. 139, p. 92). It has therefore become the "potentiality of either making the absolutely universal its principle, or equally well of elevating above the universal the self-will of private particularity . . . i.e. it has become potentially evil" (*Enc.Logic.* par. 139, p. 92).

78. Bradley, "Hegel's Theory of Tragedy," p. 382.

79. *Ibid.*

80. *Ibid.* p. 381.

81. *Ibid.* p. 383.

82. "[T]he situation with which Orestes or Antigone has to deal, and so in a sense the whole tragedy, arises from evil. . . . [I]n many Greek drama [there are] . . . repeated reminders that what is at work in the disasters is the unsleeping Ate which follows an ancestral sin" (*ibid.* p. 380).

83. See *Hegel's Theory of Imagination*.

84. Thus Antigone, no less than Macbeth, was "figuring out" what to do; her imagination, as a faculty, was no less good than Macbeth's. But it was also, like his, no less bad: Her imagined solutions conflicted with her society's imagined solutions. It is true that there is far more active imagining of possibilities in *Macbeth* than in *Antigone*. But the proliferation of imaginings, while making it a more subjective play, does not make it a modern one, particularly if conscience is necessary for modernity.

85. In Chapter 11, Part II, I argue that it is in Shakespeare's Romance plays as a genre that the phenomenological role of the imagination in drama becomes particularly significant.

86. "Let not our babbling dreams affright our souls" *Richard III*, 5.6. 37.

87. See Chapter 3.

88. Denton J. Snider, cited in *Shakespearean Criticism* vol. 3, Laurie Lanzen Harris, editor and Mark W. Scott, associate editor (Michigan: Gale Research Company, 1986) p. 167.

89. (*Macbeth*, 5.5. 22–27, p. 2613) *Aesth.* p. 420, my italics.

90. *Henry V*, 4.1. 99, p. 1493.

91. *Henry IV* Part 1, 1.2. 175–81, p. 1164.

92. *Henry IV* Part 2, 5.5. 47–49, p. 1374.

93. Schlegel, cited in *Shakespeare Criticism* vol. 6, p. 255.

94. Macbeth is not a hypocrite. So he does not directly help us see how someone could fool himself. But in discussing his superstition, we have introduced something important. We have introduced the notion of an unconscious characteristic that can ease the passage from conscience to evil in a way that legitimates the evil, making it seem a kind of necessary good, a means to a predicted and necessary end.

95. "... being awake, I do despise my dream" (*Henry IV* Part 2, 5.5. 41, p. 45–49).

96. Henry IV's (Bolingbroke's) final view of the world was that it was an aimless changing of time into space (see above pp. 198–99 and *Henry IV* Part 2, 3.1. 44–52, pp. 1337–38). It was a changing over which he had no control. In contrast, Henry V *seems* to have redeemed time by reigning virtuously over change. Bolingbroke is superstitious about the forces governing the changing world. Hal is calculative about governance. True, Hal makes noises as if he were superstitious (he has paid people to pray for Richard II so that the crime of his murder is redeemed). But he *pays* them, and he assumes he has paid the bill in full. Someone superstitious (e.g., his father) is not able to put ghosts to rest so easily. In the superstitious person, there are remnants of the unhappy consciousness: The power(s) over things are not gained by sovereign economics.

97. Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, translated by Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Holingdale in *Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo* (New York: Vintage Random House, 1989) p. 60.

98. For the phenomenon of the Inverted World of the Understanding, see *PoS* par. 157–59, p. 96–99.

Notes to Chapter 10

1. The full answer becomes clear in Chapter 11.
2. Georg Lukács, *The Young Hegel*, p. 416–17.
3. Lukács, p. 417. See also Hegel's account of tragedy in his *Natural Law*, translated by T. M. Knox with an Introduction by H. B. Acton (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975) p. 104ff.
4. Whether it is a Marxist reading or simply the truth about Hegel is debatable: H. S. Harris claims that "while both Hegel and Marx are Christian socialists, Hegel is less of a *believer* and for that very reason, a better philosopher" ("The Social Ideal of Hegel's Economic Theory," in *Hegel's Philosophy of Action*, ed. Lawrence S. Stepelevich, David Lamb. NJ: Humanities Press, 1983, p. 52).
5. See Hegel's *System of Ethical Life*, p. 131–32.
6. *PoR* par. 220, p. 141.

7. This notion of two levels of sublation (punishment and pardon) is my reading of Hegel. Though I stand by it, not everyone will agree that it is to be found in his *PoR*. (That the role of monarchic pardon is, according to Hegel, part of a rational institutional State, is not, however, debatable.)

8. *PoR* par. 152, p. 109.

9. *PoR* par. 282, p. 186, my italics. Andrew Cutrofello, recalling Lady Macbeth's despair that what is done cannot be undone (*Macbeth* 5.1. 57–58, p. 2609), asked me the interesting question of whether this is "a deliberate allusion [by Hegel] to the central problem of *Macbeth*." There is no evidence that Hegel was thinking of *Macbeth* here, but the idea is tantalizing. I leave this provocative question for readers to consider further. But I will reply that the association with *Macbeth* shows us just how bleak things can be when the possibility of pardon is not present in a society. It also reveals that when social redemption through pardon does happen, it often occurs on top of graves. I touch on this topic again in my final chapter.

10. *PoR* par. 282, p. 186.

11. Ibid. See Knox's note to par. 282, p. 371.

12. Similarly, (Falstaff's) wit has to be figured into a language that embodies the life and reason of the ethical order. But mere policy must not replace mind: The call for educated *imaginings* is made on behalf of the State as much as individuals. I address the education of wit in Part III of this book.

13. Greenblatt, *Will in the World*, p. 98.

14. Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention*, p. 321–22.

15. Yeats, cited in Bloom, p. 321.

16. Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention*, p. 321–22.

17. We recall that "The origin of evil in general is to be found in the mystery of freedom" (*PoR* par. 139 addition, p. 92).

18. Pistol laments: "Fortune is Bardolph's foe, and frowns on him; / For he hath stolen a pax, and hanged must a' be: / A damned death! / Let gallows gape for dog; let man go free / And let not hemp his wind-pipe suffocate: / But Exeter hath given the doom of death / For pax of little price" (*Henry V*, 3.6. 40–46, p. 1485).

19. *Henry V*, 3.6. 98–103, p. 1486.

20. Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention*, p. 324.

21. I develop this notion of universal wit below.

22. See my discussion of the 1599 Bishop's Ban at the end of Chapter 8.

23. See *Aesth.* p. 64.

24. *PoR* par. 281, p. 185.

25. Hegel divides his discussion of the State into three: its constitution (constitutional law), its relation to other states (international law), and the process of the State over time (World-History) (*PoR* par. 259, p. 160). Our concern lies in the first section, with the constitution.

26. *PoR* par. 257, p. 155.

27. *PoR* par. 258, p. 155–56.
28. *PoR* par. 260, p. 155.
29. *PoR* par. 261, p. 161.
30. *PoR* par. 276, p. 179.
31. Ibid.
32. *PoR* par. 271, p. 174; see also par. 269, p. 164.
33. *PoR* addition to par. 286, p. 188.
34. *PoR* par. 273, p. 176.
35. *PoR* par. 275, p. 179.
36. *PoR* par. 277, p. 179.
37. *PoR* par. 278, p. 180.
38. *PoR* par. 285, p. 187, my underlining.
39. *PoR* addition to par. 279, p. 183.
40. *PoR* addition to par. 279, p. 182.
41. *PoR* addition to par. 279, p. 183.
42. *PoR* par. 286, p. 187.
43. Ibid, p. 188.
44. *PoR* par. 286, p. 188.

45. I have limited my discussion of the *Philosophy of Right* to the topics needed (punishment and monarchic pardon). Much of worth in that work, and many of its complexities have therefore been left out of my discussion. For detailed investigation of issues in the *Philosophy of Right*, see (among others) H. S. Harris' "The Social Ideal of Hegel's Economic Theory," in *Hegel's Philosophy of Action*, ed. Lawrence S. Stepelevich and David Lamb (NJ: Humanities Press, 1983) and Shlomo Avineri's *Hegel's theory of the Modern State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972).

46. Hegel's *Science of Logic* provides a discussion of the transition from infinite negative judgments to the sublation of these. The result of the sublation is the judgment of reflection (*Sc. of Logic*, p. 642–43). I do not have the space here to develop this.

47. This is a contentious statement. But I think I am right to assert that, on the one hand, for Hegel the *ideal* State would have as its personality someone who was himself rational and who expressed rectitude from intention as well as in deed; but that, on the other hand, for Hegel the *rational* structure of the State does not require this since monarch's pardoning deed, even if not itself rational or intentional, is, as a crime against policy, always already an expression of his rectitude. The rationality lies in the organism as a whole, in its constitution, not in the monarch; this is what safeguards the State against the particularized rule of an ego.

48. Hegel, *System der Sittlichkeit* (translated by H. S. Harris and T. M. Knox as *System of Ethical Life* in *Hegel: System of Ethical Life and First Philosophy of Spirit* (Albany: SUNY Press 1979) 97–186, p. 162. Also cited in H. S. Harris' "The Social Ideal of Hegel's Economic Theory" in *Hegel's Philosophy of*

Action editors Lawrence S. Stepelevich, David Lamb (NJ: Humanities Press, 1983) 49–74, note 19 p. 71.

in *Selected Essays on G. W. F. Hegel*, edited by Lawrence S. Stepelevich, David Lamb (NJ: Humanities Press, 1993) 187–212, pp. 195–96.

49. In Absolute Knowing Hegel writes:

The self-knowing Spirit knows not only itself but also the negative of itself, or its limit: to know one's limit is to know how to sacrifice oneself. This sacrifice is the externalization in which Spirit displays the process of its becoming Spirit in the form of *free contingent happening*, intuiting its pure Self as Time outside of it, and equally its Being as Space. This last becoming of Spirit, *Nature*, is its living immediate Becoming; Nature, the externalized Spirit, is in its existence nothing but this eternal externalization of its *continuing existence* and the movement which reinstates the *Subject* (*PoS*, par. 807, p. 492).

I discuss this in Chapter 11.

50. See Walter Cohen's "Foreword" to *Henry VIII*, p. 3111.

51. Ibid.

52. *Henry VIII*, 3.2. 333–37, p. 3166.

53. *Henry VIII*, 4.2. 73–75, p. 3175.

54. *Henry VIII*, 3.2. 377–81, p. 3167–68.

55. *Henry VIII*, 5.3. 86–91, p. 3186–89.

56. *Henry VIII*, 5.4. p. 3190–92.

57. *Aesth.* p. 418.

58. *Aesth.* p. 419.

59. I cite his example of Macbeth in my Introduction so I will not do so again here.

60. (*Henry VIII*, 3.2.) *Aesth.* p. 420.

61. See our discussion of evil in Chapter 8 and 9.

62. In a similar way it is possible to argue that Hegel's theory of the constitutional monarchy was a politically motivated nod to his Prussian ruler. Many commentators view the *PoR* to be a work produced under fear of censure. (See Jacques D'Hondt's *Hegel in his Time: Berlin, 1818–1831*, translated by John Burbidge, with Nelson Roland and Judith Levasseur [Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 1988]). But this does not speak to the inherent dialectical necessities he saw in the development of the State. Further discussion of this is not possible here.

63. For the expression "quiet repose" see *Enc.Phil.Mind.* p. 254–55. As we noted above, according to Hegel, war is the necessary external destabilizer of the State. Even if monarchic pardon stabilizes a State for a period of time, that which redeems a period of life in a State does not redeem all of history.

64. Frye, cited in Cohen "Foreword" to *All is True* p. 3113.
65. See Cohen's "Foreword," p. 3111.
66. Ibid.
67. Ibid. p. 3111–12.
68. *Henry VIII*, 2.4. 196–97, p. 3153.
69. Cohen's "Foreword," p. 3114 (*Henry VIII*, 1.2. 80–81, p. 3130).
70. Cohen "Foreword," p. 3114.
71. Hegel, *PoS* par. 669–70, p. 407–8. See John Russon's *The Self and its Body in Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1997).
72. It is important to note that for Hegel, the forgiveness in question is not religious per se. For Hegel, even within the level of the State, religion can be a ground for ethical life but it cannot be the truth of the State (*PoR* par. 270 addition and remark, p. 164–74). Hegel argues for the separation of church and State (Ibid. p. 173). Likewise, in the *PoS*, forgiveness must be understood speculatively, not only religiously. The universality of forgiveness is part of the sublation of religion by the philosophical standpoint of Absolute Knowing: It is not just God who can forgive us. We must forgive each other. Each person actualizes forgiveness within the social fabric. I discuss forgiveness in more detail below in Chapter 11.
73. "This Substance is, as Subject, pure, *simple negativity*. . . ." *PoS*, par. 18, p. 10.

Notes to Chapter 11

1. *Pericles*, Scene 21, 125–27, p. 2769.
2. In Hegel, I argue, the community of absolute knowers is the community of those who use a language of Universal Wit. The State is the body of Objective Spirit, but when we look for the body of Absolute Spirit, we do not find one because it is a kind of judgment.
3. Hegel does not mention *Pericles* in the *Aesthetics*.
4. A third of the play was not written by Shakespeare: George Wilkins wrote the first nine scenes out of the 22.
5. *Richard II*, 5.5.
6. *Pericles*, 5.1.
7. This comparison of *Richard II* with *Pericles* was presented to me by Ian Patrick McHugh. I thank him for his careful and passionate arguments in my graduate seminar on Hegel and Shakespeare (Duquesne University 2008) as to why both the character and the play *Pericles* fail to satisfy us. In a moment, I am going to show why I disagree with him.
8. As I mentioned last chapter, e.g., Jupiter in *Cymbeline*, and Apollo in *The Winter's Tale*, and the temple of Athena in *Pericles*.

9. E.g., Ben Jonson. See *Ben Jonson's Literary Criticisms*, edited by Redwine, James O. Jr. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970) pp. 119–20, 173, 182, 186–88, 194.

10. Frye, Northrop, *A Natural Perspective: The Development of Shakespearean Comedy and Romance* (New York: Columbia UP, 1995) p. 6–7.

11. “[U]ntil Spirit has completed itself *in itself*, until it has completed itself as world-Spirit, it cannot reach its consummation as self-consciousness” (*PoS* par. 802, p. 488); “This Becoming presents a slow-moving succession of Spirits, a gallery of images, each of which, endowed with all the riches of Spirit, moves thus slowly just because the Self has to penetrate and digest this entire wealth of its substance” (*PoS* par. 807, p. 492). According to Hegel, we cannot reach this culmination without the Reformation, Kant, or the French Revolution. So it is not possible to compare Renaissance Shakespeare Romance with Hegel in these respects.

12. “Spirit necessarily appears in Time, and it appears in Time just so long as it has not *grasped* its pure Notion, i.e. has not annulled Time . . . when this latter grasps itself it sets aside its Time-form, comprehends this intuiting, and is a comprehended and comprehending intuiting” (*PoS* par. 801, p. 487).

13. See my discussion of her theory of performativity in relation to wit above (end of Chapter 6).

14. A comparison of Universal Wit with Cynthia Willett’s notion of Irony would be fruitful. See her *Irony in the Age of Empire* (Indiana, 2008).

15. According to Hegel’s account of the imagination, its hallmark is precisely the mixing up of times and spaces (*Enc.Phil.Mind.Psy.* p. 206–9).

16. *Aesth.* p. 1227–28, my adaptation.

17. *PoS* par. 808 and 807, p. 492.

18. *PoS* par. 28, p. 16.

19. *PoS* par. 808, p. 492–93.

20. *PoS* par. 801, p. 487.

21. Spoken by Gower in *Pericles*, 18. 1–4, p. 2759.

22. *Pericles* 1.7. 44–46, p. 2738.

23. *PoS* par. 807, pg. 492.

24. *Ibid.*

25. “. . . to know one’s limit is to know how to sacrifice oneself. This sacrifice is the externalization in which Spirit displays the process of its becoming Spirit in the form of *free contingent happening*, intuiting its pure Self as Time outside of it, and equally its Being as Space. This last becoming of Spirit, *Nature*, is its living immediate Becoming; Nature, the externalized Spirit, is in its existence nothing but this eternal externalization of its *continuing existence* and the movement which reinstates the *Subject*” (*Ibid.*).

26. *Pericles*, 15.1. 23–25, p. 2752.

27. *Pericles*, 20. 5–8, p. 2766.
28. *Pericles*, 22. 65, p. 2774.
29. *Pericles*, 22. 81, p. 2774.
30. At the end of his account of Absolute Knowing, Hegel writes:

The *goal*, Absolute Knowing, or Spirit that knows itself as Spirit, has for its path the recollection of the Spirits as they are in themselves and as they accomplish the organization of their realm. Their preservation, regarded from the side of their free existence appearing in the form of contingency, is History; but regarded from the side of their [philosophically] comprehended organization, it is the Science of Knowing in the sphere of appearance: the two together, comprehended History, form alike the inwardizing and *the Calvary of absolute Spirit*, the actuality, truth, and certainty of his throne, without which he would be lifeless and alone (*PoS* par. 808, p. 493, my italics).

31. In *The Winter's Tale*, the text does not reveal whether the stone's coming to life is a miracle or a ruse on the part of Hermione and Paula. In Chapter 12, I argue that it is made clear, but in another way altogether. Andrew Cutrofello notes that my point here (that everything is made clear at the end of a Romance play) is perhaps most evident in *Cymbeline*.

32. See my "The Dead Burying the Dead versus Dialectical Resurrection in Hegel's the *Phenomenology of Spirit*" (unpublished). In it, I analyze Hegel's references to graves in terms of the burial and resurrection of phenomenological self-knowledge. Antigone's memorialization of Polyneices establishes a universal individual in a way that the grave of the Unchangeable beyond cannot (and in a way that Hegel's critics cannot).

33. *Pericles*, 21. 125–27, p. 2769.
34. *PoS* par. 32, p. 19.
35. *Pericles*, 19.12, p. 2761.
36. *Pericles*, 16.82, p. 2757.
37. "Well, if we had of every nation a traveler, we should lodge them all with this sign" (*Pericles*, 16.99, p. 2757).
38. *Pericles*, 16.69, p. 2757.
39. *Pericles*, 16.70, p. 2757.
40. Soren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, trans. Alastair Hannay (New York: Penguin, 1985) p. 90.
41. *PoS* par. 522, p. 317–18.
42. There are many similes and metaphors used in Shakespeare's Romances and that aid in the transition from tragedy to comedy and that are not found

in Hegel's Absolute Knowing. But the fact that I have been able to evoke some of them in my exploration of Universal Wit in relation to Hegel as well as to Shakespeare is an argument in favour of the similarities of their absolute standpoints. Some of the ones not mentioned explicitly by Hegel are: metaphors of the Sea (its range, depths and tempests); female fecundity; the fabric of human being and the fabric of culture as depicted in needlework, weaving, cloth, and clothing; the difference between nature and art; grafting; and generation from seed (both in terms of nature, seeds of sin, seeds of disease, and seeds of salvation).

43. In this expression "more sophisticated *moral* imagination" I am using the term "moral" in its current range of meanings, not in the sense criticized by Hegel. See my Introduction, pp. 10–11.

44. This starting point originated with Fichte at the beginning of his deduction of his three principles of the *Science of Knowledge*. Hegel's *PoS* provides experience (content) to these principles and develops them in a way that reveals (contra Fichte) that subject and substance are equally important.

45. The discussion in this section is found in more detail in my discussion of Hegel's early *Geistesphilosophie* Fragment 17, in *Hegel's Theory of Imagination* p. 26ff.

46. The gap of possible difference was correctly recognized by Fichte to be what made the imagination a wavering between finite and infinite. See his *Science of Knowledge* p. 250.

47. Cf. Aristotle, *De Anima*, trans. W. S. Hett. Loeb Classical Edition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936), p. 137, Bekker line 424a17–26.

48. *Sc. of Logic* p. 49.

49. Frye, "Something Rich and Strange: Shakespeare's Approach to Romance," ed. Michael Schonberg (Stratford: Stratford Festival Publication, 1982), p. 1.

50. Frye, "Something Rich and Strange" p. 1.

51. See "Conscience. The 'Beautiful Soul,' Evil and its Forgiveness" in *PoS* p. 383–410.

52. Harris' translation of *PoS* par. 793 (Miller p. 482) in *Ladder* Vol. 2, p. 719.

53. *Tempest*, 4.1. 152–58, p. 3095.

54. Harris, *Ladder*, Vol. 2, p. 484. Witness again Julius and Lucinde, or Hyperion who becomes a hermit (*Ladder*. p. 486).

55. Harris, *Ladder*. Vol. 2 p. 479ff.

56. *Ladder*, Vol. 2 p. 506–8, 518. Harris also mentions the case of the slave Terence.

57. *Ladder*, Vol. 2, p. 505–6.

58. This was Fichte's expression for what ought to happen in his *Science of Knowledge* of 1794. (See *Sc.of.Kn.* p. 23).

- 59. *Tempest*, 1.2. 44–45, p. 3058.
- 60. *Tempest*, 1.2. 49–50, p. 3058.
- 61. *Tempest*, 1.2. 101–3, p. 3059.
- 62. *Tempest*, 1.1. 27–29, p. 3056.
- 63. Frye, “Something Rich and Strange” p. 5.

64. In Chapter 9, I argue that Macbeth does not have a conscience because he is caught in a pre-conscientious dream-world of superstition. Prospero’s world *is* magical, but Prospero (unlike Macbeth) is the magician and thus the whole context is different from Macbeth’s world. My argument about the language of the Romances has been that it is phenomenologically insightful language, the language of Universal Wit. So even if Prospero’s sense of right and wrong is a pre-enlightenment one and is imbued with the magical, the genre of Romance raises his role above these problems. I am arguing that the Romances offer a post-conscience (i.e., post moral) phenomenal view of things.

65. This answers the question we asked in Chapter 10 as to whether forgiveness introduces a religious element into the absolute standpoints of art and philosophy: The answer (hopefully already clear but here spelled out) is that for Hegel and Shakespeare, forgiveness is not only a religious concept; it is fundamentally a human conception.

66. Harris makes it clear that without this, the Beautiful Soul is stuck:

From their own doctrine of creative genius they ought to be able to learn that no one can justly be condemned as a lost soul. Spirit is forgiveness. The self-consciously repentant spirit forgives itself, because it recognizes the necessity, the *absoluteness*, of its situation; and no repentance that contains the recognition of this common lot of humanity should be rejected. So it is precisely the “hardheadedness” of the judge who refuses to listen, and to explain, or the self-satisfaction of the art that preaches the subjective “fragmentariness” of genius, and the magical exclusiveness of artistic vision, that stands in the way of its own millennium (*Ladder*, 498).

- 67. *Tempest*, “Epilogue” lines 1–20, p. 3106.
- 68. *PoS* par. 807, p. 492.
- 69. Frye, “Something Rich and Strange” p. 11.
- 70. *Tempest*, 2.1. 98–92, p. 3072.
- 71. Frye, “Something Rich and Strange” p. 14.

Notes to Chapter 12

- 1. *King Lear* 1.2. 167–68, p. 2490.

2. *The Rape of Lucrece*, 853–54, p. 660.
3. Cited in Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture*, p. 30.
4. Wallace Stevens, “The Poems of Our Climate” in *Collected Poetry and Prose*, the Library of America, 1997, p. 178.
5. *Winter’s Tale*, 4.4. 89–93, p. 2923.
6. See *PoS* par. 545, an account in which Hegel again cites Rameau’s nephew.
7. See Harris’ commentary on par. 545, *Ladder*, pp. 340–41.
8. Pure Insight can be seen as the social expansion of Falstaff’s non-proprietary insights as much as it is of Hal’s. But it is more the case that the development starts with Falstaffian humorous wit and then becomes serious through Hal. The Terror attacks the living body and brings death (thereby creating many real counterfeit men—i.e., dead ones). The Terror is therefore more a development of Hal’s evil wit than Falstaff’s jolly one. Falstaff is the spirit of the *living* counterfeit men. As we shall see, in this respect, Falstaff’s wit presents our path to the cure for infection, rather than the path to the *caput mortuum* of wit.
9. The following is not meant to be a contribution to scholarship on the topic of infection in the Renaissance or in Shakespeare. I provide it to inform the Hegelian and general philosophy readers against errors of interpretation regarding the topic in Shakespeare.
10. Alexander Schmidt, *Shakespeare Lexicon and quotation Dictionary* Vol. 1, Third Edition enlarged by Gregor Sarrazin (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1971) p. 585.
11. *Coriolanus*, 3.1. 296, p. 2834.
12. *Coriolanus*, 3.1. 310, p. 2834.
13. Alexander Schmidt, *Shakespeare Lexicon*, p. 585.
14. *Othello*, 4.1. 20, p. 2147.
15. Alexander Schmidt, *Shakespeare Lexicon*, p. 584.
16. *Hamlet*, 3.4. 140, p. 1723.
17. Alexander Schmidt, *Shakespeare Lexicon*, p. 585.
18. *Timon of Athens*, 4.3. 202, p. 2290.
19. *Henry IV* Part 2, 4.3. 297, p. 1362.
20. *Macbeth*, 5.1. 49, p. 2609.
21. *Macbeth*, 5.1. 61–65, p. 2609.
22. *Macbeth*, 1.5. 16–18, p. 2572.
23. Cited in William Sydney Charles Copeman’s *Doctors and Disease in Tudor Times* (London: Dawson’s of Pall Mall, 1960), p. 15.
24. *Ibid.* p. 14–17.
25. See Tillyard *The Elizabethan World Picture* Chapter 3, p. 31. Tillyard also explains that there was a fusion of Biblical and Platonic ideas: “The *perfection* is at once that of the Platonic Good and of the Garden of Eden, while

Adam's fall from it is also the measure of the distance separating created things from their Platonic archetypes" (p. 30).

26. Ibid. p. 28.

27. *Hamlet*, 1.4. 65, p. 1684.

28. Tillyard, p. 81–82.

29. Ibid. p. 80.

30. In other words, that sight carries influences into the eye—a notion often used to explain love at first sight. See Suzanne Biernoff's *Sight and Embodiment in the Middle Ages* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002) p. 48–49. See too Romeo's discussion about women infecting him with love (*Romeo and Juliet*, 1.1. 260ff especially 206 and 220, p. 876–78).

31. *Richard III*, 1.2. 144–49, pp. 522–23.

32. *Macbeth*, 4.3. 148ff, p. 2606.

33. *Winter's Tale*, 4.4. 80ff, p. 2923.

34. *Winter's Tale*, 1.2. 110–21, p. 2887.

35. *Winter's Tale*, 1.2. 140 ff, p. 2888.

36. See my Chapter 3 section on Anti-*Aufhebung*.

37. *Hamlet*, 3.2. 359–60, p. 1717.

38. *Hamlet*, 4.7. 118–19, p. 1739.

39. *Winter's Tale*, 1.2. 145, p. 2888.

40. *Winter's Tale*, 1.2. 201, p. 2889.

41. *Winter's Tale*, 1.2. 204–208. p. 2890.

42. Parts III and IV of the chapter were originally presented at the Ontario Hegel Association, York University, March 30–April 1, 2007.

43. Hegel was criticized in his time for his view of illness and healing by Hans Adolf Goeden, a doctor of medicine in Lithuania, Silesia and Mecklenburg-Strelitz, in a 1819 article entitled "Critische Bemerkungen ueber Hegel's Begriff vom Wesen der Krankheit und der Heilung" (in Oken's *Isis oder Encyclopaedische Zeitung* Jena 1819, pp. 1127–38). (See Petry note in *PoN* vol. 3, p. 371–72). According to Petry, the main points of Goeden's criticism were: "(i) that he had attempted to explain disease in terms of sensibility, irritability and reproduction, and (ii) that he had ascribed the organism's being in a diseased state to its being in conflict with its 'inorganic potency.'" As Petry points out in detail, subsequent discoveries about the role of parasites and germs in causing and spreading disease "were soon to prove the pertinence of Goeden's criticism" (Petry note in *PoN* vol. 3, p. 372).

44. "As a result of this susceptibility [from age, mortality, congenital defects and external influences], there is a build up of a single aspect which does not accommodate the inner power of the organism, **and the organism then exhibits the opposed forms of being and self, the self being precisely that for which the negative of itself has being.**" (*PoN* "The disease of the individual" par. 371 Addition, Petry p. 194, my bold).

"Diseases such as *epidemics* and *plagues* are not to be regarded as a particular determination of the organism, but as an aspect of the determinateness of external nature to which the organism itself belongs. They may well be said to **infect** the organism." (*PoN* "The disease of the individual" par. 371 Addition, Petry p. 197, my bold).

45. "... the *actual incipience* of disease ... consists in the organism's being stimulated beyond its ability to operate, so that the individual system gains subsistence in opposition to the self. ... **This is in fact a matter of digestion, and it is possible for the disease to be a general indigestibility**" (*PoN* "The disease of the individual" par. 372 Addition, Petry p. 199, my bold).

"The physiology of the plant is necessarily more obscure than that of the animal body, because it is simpler, its assimilation passes through fewer intermediaries, and change occurs as immediate **infection**" (*PoN* "The Vegetable Organism" par. 345 Remark, Petry p. 54, my bold).

"It is ... an essential aspect of the organic process in general, that it should destroy, **infect**, and assimilate that which comes to it from without. As water is absorbed, it is immediately affected by the force of animation, so that it is posited at once as pervaded by organic life. The main point about the plant is that this transformation occurs without mediation. ... Yet the immediate **infection** into lymph also occurs [in animals]" (*PoN* "The Vegetable Organism" par. 346a Addition, Petry p. 67–68, my bold).

"... the other side of this is the process itself, the activity within the first determination of the plant, **universal life**. This is the formal process of simply immediate transformation, it is the infinite living power constituted by this **infection**. Living being is stable and determined in and for itself. By coming into conflict with it, external chemical influence is immediately transformed. Consequently, any undue encroachment by chemical action is immediately mastered by living being, which preserves itself through its contact with an other. **It poisons and transforms this other in an immediate manner. It therefore resembles spirit, which transforms and appropriates that which it sees; for what it sees becomes its perception**" (*PoN* "The Vegetable Organism" par. 346a Addition, Petry p. 74, my bold).

46. "The **infection** consists of the second term's being made the opposite of the first, in order that as other (and as posited as other by the first term), it may be posited as being identical with this first term. Consequently, it is the activity of the form which first determines the second term as an opposition; the form therefore comports itself with regard to the other as an existing process. ... Conversely ... [i]t has also to be assumed that linear activity has also been imparted to the second term, and that one side of it has been **infected** as opposition; consequently, its other extremity is at once identical with the first extremity of the first term. ... One finds in magnetism ... that it is precisely

to the extent that identity is identical that it is posited as being differentiated, and to the extent that differentiation is differentiated that it is posited as being identical. . . . This is the transparently active Notion" (*PoN* "Physics of Total Individuality" par. 314 Remark, Petry pp. 111–12, my bold).

47. The German word for infection and contagion is the same: It is *Ansteckung*. According to the Joseph Gauvin's *Wortindex zu Hegels Phaenomenologie des Geistes* (Hegel Studien Beiheft 14), the word *die Ansteckung* comes up seven times in *Phenomenology of Spirit*. According to Gauvin, five of the seven occur in the struggle of the Enlightenment with superstition section (I have only been able to find four instances there); the other two are in "Spirit. Culture and its realm of actuality" and in "Religion. The Abstract Work of Art." I have also found an instance of it in a verb form, *anstecken*, in the Lordship and Bondsman section, but the verb form does not mean infection in the same way. There, Hegel writes that the slave must experience an absolute fear, must be "infected" through and through by negative being. The verb *anstecken* is not primarily a medical term: It means to pin on (with a needle), to slip on (a ring), to light or set something on fire, to be catching; only figuratively is it a medical term that means to infect, to be infectious, to be contagious, to catch some illness (as well as figuratively, to catch someone's "*Stimmung*" (mood)) (*Wahrig* s. 174; *Collins German* p. 44–45). But the noun *Ansteckung* does literally (not figuratively) mean infection in the medical sense. And it is that word that appears seven times in the *Phenomenology*. The passages of import will be cited below.

48. Derrida's work on auto-immunity ought to be discussed in relationship to this. But since this chapter (indeed, this entire book) was written before I read Derrida on the topic, and since the topic in Hegel is as involved as it is, I have chosen not to engage Derrida here. Nonetheless, I briefly mention the similarities and differences between Hegelian inoculation and Derridian auto-immunity, below in my note 84. A full comparison will appear in a separate article. For Derrida on auto-immunity, see his *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason* translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2005) and other of his texts. For a good summary and discussion of the meanings of that term in Derrida, see Michael Naas' "'One Nation . . . Indivisible': Jacques Derrida on the Autoimmunity of Democracy and the Sovereignty of God" in *Research in Phenomenology*, 36 (Leiden, The Netherlands, 2006), 15–44. Dietrich Von Engelhardt, "Hegel's Philosophical Understanding of Illness" in R. S. Cohen and M. W. Wartofsky, eds. *Hegel and the Sciences* (Dordrecht, Boston, Lancaster: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1984), 123–142, p. 133.

49. "Psychic illnesses and those of the body according to Hegel, are linked concretely with each other and dependent on each other, since in the dissociation of consciousness, the 'corporeity which is as necessary for the

empirical existence of mind as it is for that of soul, is divided between these two separated sides and accordingly is divided within itself and therefore sick' (*PM* par. 406, Zusatz, p. 106)." Dietrich Von Engelhardt, "Hegel's Philosophical Understanding of Illness" in *Hegel and the Sciences*, eds. S. Cohen and M. W. Wartofsky (Dordrecht, Boston, Lancaster: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1984), 123–142, p. 133.

50. *PoS* par. 668, p. 407; "zur Verrücktheit zerüttet un zerfließt in sehn-süchtiger Schwindsucht" Surkamp s. 491.

51. In Reason, "Observation of self-consciousness in its relation to its immediate actuality" *PoS* par. 334; and in the struggle of Enlightenment passage that I cite below.

52. In the Preface, *PoS* par. 51, p. 30.

53. The story is reported by Eckermann in F. von Biedermann "Goethe's Gerspräche" (5 vols. Leipzig 1909–1911) Vol III pp. 477–78, here it is as cited in Petry's Introduction to *PoN* Vol. 1, p. 96.

54. Eric Von der Luft, "The Birth of Spirit for Hegel out of the Travesty of Medicine" in *Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit*, ed. Peter G. Stillman (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987) pp. 25–42.

55. Luft, "Birth of Spirit" p. 35, my italics.

56. Lauer adds in his commentary on this article that

... Jakob Loewenberg has argued quite plausibly that, if these "sciences" [i.e., such as phrenology] had not existed, Hegel would have had to invent them, in order to render the dialectical passage from mere nature to free spirit complete. Physiognomy and phrenology represent, so to speak, the last ditch stand of empirical observation to reduce all knowledge worthy of the name to empirical knowledge" (Lauer, Commentary on "The Birth of Spirit for Hegel out of the Travesty of Medicine" in *Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit*, ed. Stillman p. 43.)

57. Luft "Birth of Spirit" p. 35.

58. *PoS* par. 51, p. 30.

59. "What a dullard a man must be who could not be taught in a quarter of an hour the theory that there are asthenic, sthenic, and indirectly asthenic diseases, and as many modes of treatment" *PoS* par. 51, p. 30. "The Brunonian system of medicine is a theory of medicine which regards and treats diseases as caused by defective or excessive excitation. It was developed by John Brown and is outlined in his 1780 publication *Elementa Medicinae*. The theory was for a time popular." http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brunonian_system_of_medicine.

60. *Dates in Infectious Diseases: A Chronological Record in Infectious Diseases Over the Last Millennium*, edited by Helen S. J. Lee (Parthenon Publishing, 2002) p. 10–11.

61. Irwin W. Sherman, *The Power of Plagues* (Washington: ASM Press, 2006) p. 78ff.

62. *PoN* par. 371, p. 209.

63. From “Culture and its Realm of Actuality” in *PoS* par. 508, pp. 308–9 (Hegel’s italics, my bold).

64. From “Struggle of the Enlightenment with Superstition” in *PoS* par. 545, pp. 331–32, Surkamp s. 403 (my bold). The third and final reference to infection occurs in the section on religion. For reasons of time and because it is not directly relevant to my argument, I do not address it here. But for reference, here is the citation, followed by a commentary by Hegel:

Just as the *individual* self-consciousness is *immediately* present in language, so it is also immediately present as a *universal infection*; the complete separation into independent selves is at the same time the fluidity and the universally communicated unity of the many selves; language is the soul existing as soul. (“The Abstract Work of Art” [in Religion] in *PoS* par 710, p. 430. Hegel is talking about the hymn. My bold).

Harris’s comment: “It is quite possible that Hegel’s portrayal of Greek religion is influenced here by the hymn-writing of Luther; for the Reformer’s great hymns and chorales are a perfect example of the “**universal infection**” of which he speaks. . . . [E]ven children and the illiterate masses can learn them, and so participate directly and equally in the experience of singing” (Harris *Ladder*, Vol. II p. 591 commentary on *PoS* par. 710, my bold).

65. *PoS* par. 529, p. 323, my additional italics.

66. *PoS* par. 169, p. 106.

67. *PoS* par. 545, p. 331.

68. See Harris’s commentary on par. 545 (*PoS* p. 331) in *Ladder*, p. 340–41.

69. *PoN* par. 372 Z. Petry p. 200.

70. *PoN* par. 371, p. 193.

71. “Universal freedom, therefore, can produce neither a positive work nor a deed; there is left for it only *negative* action; it is merely the *fury* of destruction. . . .

. . . For that universality which does not let itself advance to the reality of an organic articulation . . . at the same time creates a distinction within itself, because it is movement or consciousness in general. . . . By virtue of its own abstraction, it divides itself into extremes equally abstract, into a simple, inflexible cold universality, and into the discrete, absolute hard rigidity and self-willed atomism of actual self-consciousness. . . . The relation, then, of these two, since each exists indivisibly and absolute for itself . . . is one of wholly *unmediated* pure negation, a negation, moreover, of the individual as a being *existing* in the

universal. The sole work and deed of universal freedom is therefore *death*, a death too which has no inner significance or filling, for what is negated is the empty point of the absolutely free self. . . . It is thus the coldest and meanest of all deaths, with no more significance than cutting off a head of cabbage or swallowing a mouthful of water." (*PoS* par. 589 and 590, pp. 359–60. See too, *Ibid.* paragraphs 590–95 pp. 359–63.)

72. *PoN* par. 371, Zusatz p. 429 as translated by and cited in Von Engelhardt p. 129. Cutrofello insightfully commented to me: its time is "out of joint."

73. *PoN* "The disease of the individual" par. 371 Addition, Petry p. 194.

74. *Ibid.*

75. *Ibid.*

76. *PoN* par. 372, p. 198–99.

77. *PoN* par. 372 Z. p. 200.

78. *PoN* par. 372 Z. p. 200.

79. *PoN* "The disease of the individual" par. 371 Addition, p. 194.

80. *PoS* par. 28, p. 16, my italics.

81. *PoS* par. 808, my italics.

82. *PoS* par. 28, pp. 16–17, my italics.

83. Von Engelhardt p. 130.

84. Spirit's self-inoculation produces cultural antigens: the infection of society by pure insight stimulates the production of an antibody to insight's pure negativity, to its pure simplicity of the "I." It is not only royal sovereignty that is destroyed: what is generated is the basis of the destruction of all forms of sovereignty. This establishes the possibility of the theater of Universal Wit—a theater upon which wit can continue to develop through its self-play in identity. We can briefly compare this with Derrida's notion of autoimmunity. The first thing to note is the following. In Hegel's philosophy, the proper body of Objective Spirit is an Ethical Substance which is a constitutional monarchy—not a democracy (or even a "democracy to come"). I have argued that, in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel moves not just from the moral world view of Kant but also from the body of Objective Spirit to Absolute Spirit in "Absolute Knowing." My question has been: What then is the body of Absolute Knowing? I have answered that it is not a body, properly speaking (and therefore not limited by the definition State or democratic community). It is rather a kind of self-conscious judgment. I have called this judgment Universal Wit, and have explained that the only body it has is the theater of identity. Derrida's theory of autoimmunity deals, in one respect, with the body of Objective Spirit—the State as a possible democracy. In this respect, Hegel and Derrida would agree that the State's autoimmunity is always already tragic. In another respect, Derrida speaks of autoimmunity as a "certain unconditional renunciation of sovereignty . . . even before the act of a decision" (*Rogues*, xiv). Derrida explains:

Such a distribution of sharing also presupposes that we think at once the unforeseeability of an event that is necessarily without horizon, the singular coming of the other, and, as a result, a *weak force*. This vulnerable force, this force without power, opens up unconditionally to what or who *comes* and comes to affect it (Ibid.).

Hegel writes that the monarch's pardon introduces a higher order (a religious order, a form of absolute spirit) into Objective Spirit. We have argued that, in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the introduction of forgiveness (by any consciousness) into Spirit (an introduction which makes possible Spirit's transition to Absolute Spirit) is also an insertion of a higher order of Absolute Spirit (down) into society. We argued that this was not limited to a religious insertion, since ultimately, for Hegel, this must occur equally in art and philosophy (the other two forms of Absolute Spirit). In this respect, Derrida and Hegel are similar: Derrida's autoimmunity, insofar as it is considered as this weak force, is "an act of messianic faith—irreligious and without messianisms. . . . [S]uch an affirmation would resound through another naming of *khōra*" (ibid.) We cannot provide here a detailed comparison of Hegelian inoculation with Derridian autoimmunity. There is however, a topic that stems from this. Andrew Cutrofello, in response to my Chapter Three on Hamlet, has raised the following question: he asks whether my Hegelian reading of Hamlet, as an "effort to go beyond Hamlet by completing a spiritual work of mourning amounts to a refusal to acknowledge that time is always out of joint." Cutrofello points to my later Chapter discussions of redeeming time (from Richard II, through Falstaff and Henry V and Henry VIII to Hegelian inoculation). Cutrofello then points to Derrida's idea of autoimmunity "as a warding off of alterity and thus, again, as a way of refusing the experience of being haunted." (This aspect of autoimmunity is similar, I would add, to our assertion above that, in the Terror, the self digests its offensive self.) Cutrofello's question therefore is: Is there a redeeming of time, and if so, doesn't that make Derrida, who (according to Cutrofello) thinks that "being haunted is an irremediable feature of subjectivity," a kind of Hegelian Unhappy Consciousness? I reply as follows. In my reading of Hegelian Absolute Knowing and of Shakespeare's Romances, the only redemption of time is in the sense that time becomes a theater of identity on which universal wit performs. This theater is always a kind of haunting. In this respect we agree with Derrida (see his notion *hauntology* in *Spectors of Marx*). As Derrida rightly makes clear, a central problem is to articulate just where this haunting occurs (e.g., in another naming of the *khōra*). I have answered this question along Hegelian–Shakespearean lines. As for whether this "place" (this theater of identity) leaves us melancholic, my answer lies in what I assert below about this theater of identity being the place of the bone, the Calvary of Spirit (see above p. 290). This theater does not consign us or Derrida to the role of an Unhappy Consciousness. But it would if we limited

the discussion to the arena of Objective Spirit, whose time is always out of joint and thus always already tragic. Evidence for this is Cutrofello's title "Hamlet Could Never Know the Peace of a 'Good Ending'": Benjamin, Derrida, and the Melancholy of Critical Theory" (presented at the conference "Beyond Reification: Critical Theory and the Challenge of Praxis" at John Cabot University, Rome, May 21–23, 2008 and published in the proceedings of that conference). As for whether Derrida limits his discussion to the arena of Objective Spirit, see his comment: "I tried to formalize the general law of this autoimmune process in 'Faith and Knowledge' . . . as a concept that exceeds the juridico-political sphere and yet, from the inside and the outside, is bound up with it" (*Rogues* p. 35). Again, this comparison of my reading of Hegel (and Shakespeare) with Derrida is to be explored further at another time.

85. Von Engelhardt p. 130.

86. A. V. Miller falls into this trap of one-sidedness when he argues that, in the chapter on Absolute Knowing, Hegel can certainly be read to be asserting a theory of personal immortality. (See his "Absolute Knowing and the Destiny of the Individual" in *Owl of Minerva* Fall 1983, Vol. 15 Number 1, pp. 45–50).

87. Perdita is the one who argues against grafting (*Winter's Tale*, 4.4. 88–103, p. 2923). I do not think she is actively a Universal Sovereign Will: but she symbolizes the naïve attitude of a society capable of generating such wills. Leontes was not a Universal Sovereign Will to begin with either. The potential is in the society until the plot moves the characters to a different and better conception of immediacy (as I discuss below).

88. Richard Strier argues that the story of the *Winter's Tale* is itself is a weaving of two texts—Pygmalion from Ovid's *Metamorphosis* and 1 Kings 17 in the Bible. See Strier's "Mind and World in the *Winter's Tale*," delivered as the Carol Brown Lecture at Carnegie Mellon University, March 20, 2008. I am using this point for my argument about grafting. I disagree with Strier's *conclusion* that the final scene of the play is supposed to represent a miracle.

89. Prospero, in the Epilogue of *The Tempest*, is also a grafting: The fact that the Epilogue is spoken to the audience by the character Prospero (rather than the actor) shows that that figure is a grafting of the dramaturge Shakespeare, the character Prospero, the actor who plays Prospero, as well as a grafting of the play with the audience. Another example of grafting, this time in Hegelian political theory, is Hegel's monarch: He is *born* king but he is also *part* of a constitutional State (see my Chapter 10). Furthermore, monarchic pardon and its social extension (forgiveness) are each graftings: In them, undoing is grafted with the deed.

90. The role of medicinal herbs is interesting in this light. Such herbs transgress the limits between nature and culture and thus serve as apt symbols for the fabric of things. The plot in the Romance dramas often hangs on the use of herbs that induce sleep (e.g., Cymbeline) or that revive (e.g., Pericles' wife).

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